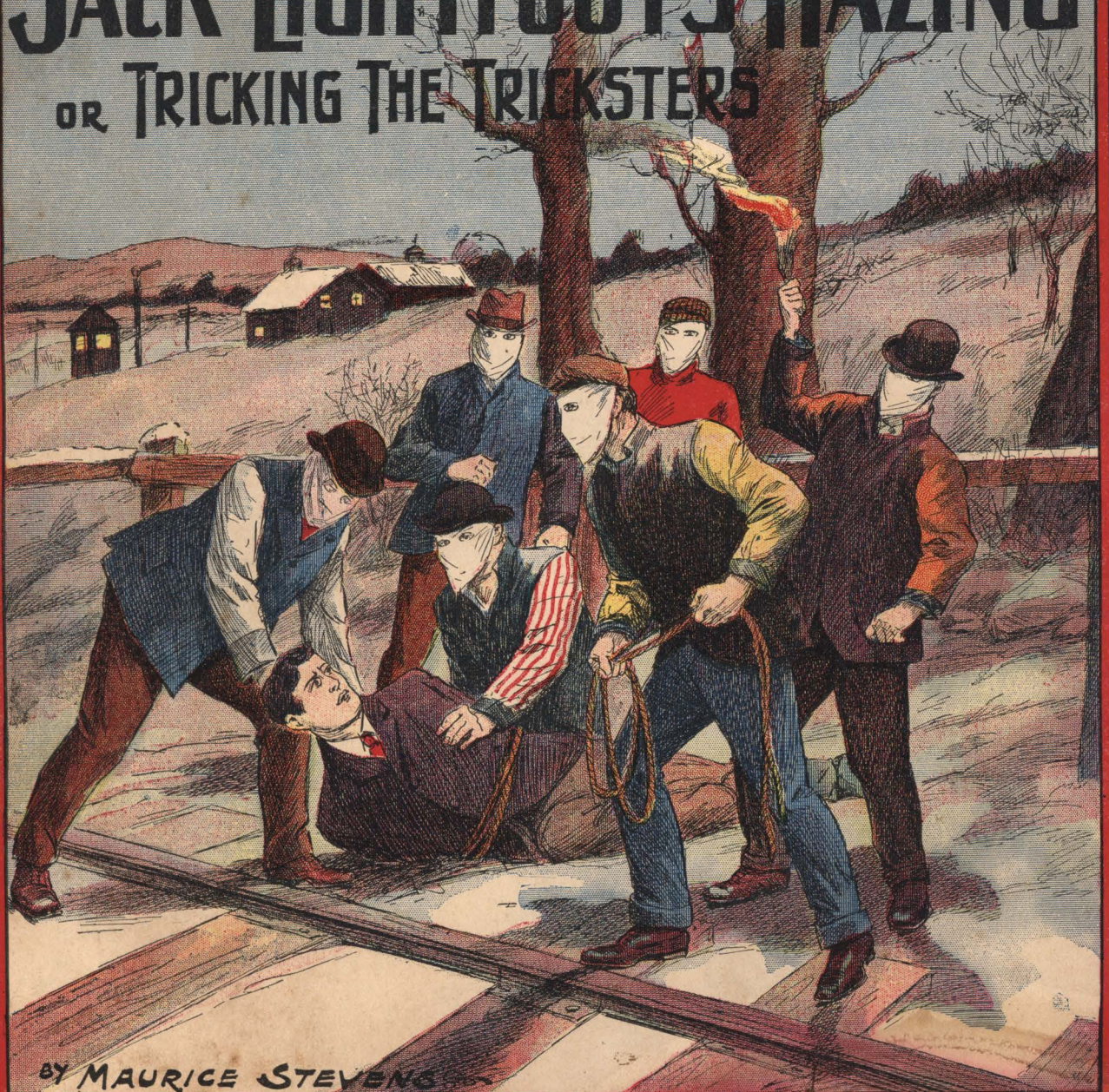


No. 53

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ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S HAZING OR TRICKING THE TRICKSTERS



BY MAURICE STEVENS

"Tie him to the rails, fellows!" said the leader. "The train will be here in a minute."

Publishers' Note. "Teach the American boy how to become an athlete, and lay the foundation for a Constitution greater than that of the United States."—Wise sayings from "Tip Top." There has never been a time when the boys of this great country took so keen an interest in all manly and health-giving sports as they do to-day. As proof of this witness the record-breaking throngs that attend college struggles on the gridiron, as well as athletic and baseball games, and other tests of endurance and skill. In a multitude of other channels this love for the "life strenuous" is making itself manifest, so that, as a nation, we are rapidly forging to the front as seekers of honest sport. Recognizing this "handwriting on the wall," we have concluded that the time has arrived to give this vast army of young enthusiasts a publication devoted exclusively to invigorating out-door life. We feel we are justified in anticipating a warm response from our sturdy American boys, who are sure to revel in the stirring phases of sport and adventure, through which our characters pass from week to week.

ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

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No. 53.

NEW YORK, February 10, 1906.

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JACK LIGHTFOOT'S HAZING;

OR,

Tricking the Tricksters.

By MAURICE STEVEN

CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

Jack Lightfoot, who after proving himself to be the best all-round athlete in Cranford or vicinity, and a natural leader, had come to Seagirt to enter the academy there with the intention of fitting himself for college. Jack was a lad clear of eye, clean of speech, and, after he had conquered a few of his faults, possessed a faculty for *doing things* while others were talking, that by degrees caused him to be looked upon as the natural leader in all the sports Young America delights in—a boy who, in learning to conquer himself put the power into his hands to wrest victory from others.

Lafe Lampton, a big, hulking chap, with an ever present craving for something to eat. Lafe always had his appetite along, and proved himself Jack's loyal friend through thick and thin. He could also do a few other things besides eat, as the reader may soon discover.

Professor Phineas Chubb, principal of Seagirt Academy, a fat, pompous man.

Professor Titus Lazenby, Chubb's assistant, called Professor "Dry-as-Dust."

Gregory Smoot, the blue-coated "watchdog" and call-boy, who guarded the approach to Chubb's "snuggery"—a sleepy fellow, who lived under a perpetual threat of being "fired" from his position.

Lee Willis, a new student from the "sunny South", filled with a fine sense of his honor, and ready for "duels" and such things.

Ben Birkett, a youth who had once been Jack's bitter foe in Cranford.

Sidney Percival, **Kid Kennedy**, **Julian Glaze**, a trio of students who thought to take Jack down a peg or two.

Kitty Percival, a pretty girl whose acquaintance Jack made under peculiar circumstances, and who seemed to take a deep interest in him.

CHAPTER I.

THE LONE FISHERMAN.

Lafe Lampton would fight at the drop of a hat in defense of a friend; and, if that friend happened to be Jack Lightfoot, he would probably be fighting even before the hat had a chance to reach the ground. But when he alone was concerned he was at times wonderfully complaisant; and with a grin would bear things that another of more peppery disposition would not have stood.

Hence it came about that when Kid Kennedy, the leader of a certain element at Seagirt Academy, proceeded to "have fun" with Lafe, they discovered that Lafe and Jack were not at all alike, even though they were such close friends.

"Sure!" said Lafe, when they told him he was but an angle worm. "I knew that before you said it."

"You know, of course," said Kennedy, speaking truculently, "that as a new man here you've got to take

your medicine, and you might as well take it without any kicking."

"Sure," said Lafe; "I've just been waiting round for you fellows to come to me and tell what I'm to do."

They were standing on the street some distance from the academy, and close to the trolley-line. A car was coming.

"You see that street corner over there," said Kennedy, pointing.

"Sure thing! Want me to walk over there?"

"We want you to walk over there, climb into that tree by the track, and when the street-car stops at the crossing, as it always does, you're to slide from the tree down onto the top of the car."

Lafe grinned.

"That's all? That's dead easy."

"And then you're to pretend to be fishing with the trolley-pole and line. And after awhile you're to swing down and enter the car and go through it, and try to sell these fish—that you've caught, you know—to the passengers."

Kennedy produced a string of "fish." They were of metal, being merely toy fish, such as are purchased for the amusement of children.

Lafe grinned again.

"Oh, say, that will be great!" he cried, clutching the string of "fish." "I bet I get more fun out of this than you do."

Forthwith he started for the crossing, with a backward glance at the approaching trolley-car.

Kid Kennedy, Sid Percival, Julian Glaze, and some others who composed the crowd that had surrounded Lafe, followed quickly; and he knew it was their intention to enter the car, and there observe that he obeyed instructions to the letter.

There was a wide smile on Lafe's face as he raced along with that dangling string of "fish," and proceeded to climb the tree with much agility. For Lafe, this was fun. He did not object at all to this; and they had been sure he would. They had anticipated a fight perhaps, or something of the kind; hence they were not a little surprised when Lafe accepted with such alacrity. They felt quite sure that Jack Lightfoot would have refused outright.

They were smiling as broadly beneath the tree as Lafe was smiling in the bare branches above, when the trolley-car drew up and stopped at the crossing. The motorman and conductor had not observed the young fellow in the tree, nor had any of the passengers.

Before the car started on again Lafe slipped with

soft feet down to the top of the car, and, squatting there, took hold of the trolley-pole, and began to go through the motions of fishing as well as he could with a pole and line as rigid as that.

Now and then when the car swung on and passed groups of people, Lafe made a frantic pretense of reeling in the line; and then would catch up one of the metal fish, make the motions of extracting a hook from its mouth, and would hold it up exultantly.

The conductor and motorman, not knowing what was taking place on top of the car, must have been puzzled now and then by the smiles bent on the car by pedestrians, and by the pointing fingers and loud laughter.

Lafe was having "fun" up there. He really enjoyed it. And, always, when he held up a "freshly-caught fish," he executed a light dance on the roof of the car and expanded his mouth in a wide grin.

He was thus performing when he was seen by Jack Lightfoot.

Jack was standing on one of the street corners with Kitty Percival.

Kitty was on her way to school—the school she attended opening its doors earlier than the academy; and Jack, having encountered her as she walked toward the car line, had sauntered with her to that corner.

The reader may guess whether that encounter had been wholly accidental on Jack's part. I refuse at this stage of the game to say; though I may have a word or two on the subject in a later chapter.

Whether it was an "accident" or not, Kitty Percival was apparently not at all displeased to see this handsome youth from Cranford; and her manner was bright and gay, as she walked on with him toward the crossing. She was a very beautiful girl, Jack thought, with laughing eyes of blue and a hint of gold in the brown of her hair. Jack had saved her life when it was threatened by a fast express-train on a high trestle, and that was a thing she was not likely to forget.

"Will you look at that?" Jack cried, when he observed Lafe "fishing" on top of the trolley-car that just then came whizzing toward them.

Lafe saw them standing there at the crossing; and he proceeded to make a pretense of reeling in his line, and then held up one of the largest of the metal fish, dancing and waving his arms.

But for the jolt and rumble of the car, the motorman and conductor, as well as the passengers, must have heard the thud of Lafe's dancing feet at that time.

Jack took off his cap and waved it, and Kitty Percival waved her muff.

Lafe held up the string of fish, and spread his mouth in a wide grin, at the same time rubbing his hand round on his stomach to indicate that he expected to enjoy a feast from those fish.

The people in the car, with the exception of Kid Kennedy and his "committee," were still ignorant of Lafe's presence on top of the car; but shortly after Jack and Kitty Percival had entered, Lafe swung down from the roof and came into the car himself, carrying his string of fish.

Kennedy had stared with jealous hate at Jack, when he saw him with Kitty Percival; yet Jack had affected not to know that Kennedy was within a hundred miles, and had talked ceaselessly with the girl, as much for the purpose of angering Kennedy as because he had anything to say.

"Fresh fish!" said Lafe, swinging through the aisle, and stopping before each passenger. "Fresh fish, cheap. Who wants some fresh fish?"

Kennedy had almost forgotten the "fun" he was going to have with Lafe, in the jealousy that now troubled him. He fancied he had some sort of claim on Kitty Percival; in fact, he had spoken of her to other fellows as his "girl;" and that those fellows should now see her laughing and talking with Jack Lightfoot, who had suddenly become his bitterest enemy, was gall and wormwood. He knew what the fellows would think, even though fear of him might keep them from saying it.

Lafe came up to Kennedy with his "fish."

"Fresh fish!" he cried, swinging them in Kennedy's face.

"What are they?" asked Kennedy, trying to laugh. "Suckers?"

"No, they're for suckers! Have some?"

Kennedy's face was already flushed, but it grew redder, and then fiery when he saw that Kitty Percival had smiled at Lafe Lampton's witticism.

"Take 'em away!" he growled angrily.

Lafe swung the fish into the faces of the other members of the "committee" that had been selected to follow and watch him and observe that he complied with all the requirements.

"Fresh fish!" he bawled. "They're not suckers, but they're for suckers! Have some?"

Kitty Percival laughed until there seemed to be tears in her blue eyes, and Jack could not help laughing with her; and he laughed the more merely for the purpose of irritating Kennedy and his committee, when he saw that it annoyed them.

The people in the car joined in the fun. They were

familiar with the antics of the students of Seagirt Academy; and, therefore, they knew at once that Lafe was a new student who was being made by the older students to do certain ridiculous "stunts," of which this was one.

The conductor knew the same, and, though he collected a fare of Lafe, and Lafe tried to pay it with one of the fish, which, of course, the conductor refused, he did not interfere with Lafe's merriment, but only smiled with the rest.

"Fresh fish!" cried Lafe, like a regular fish-seller, as he paraded the car, offering his wares to every one.

He came up to Jack and Kitty Percival.

"Fresh fish!" he called, swinging the string before them. "You know they're fresh, for you saw me catching them."

When Jack and Kitty got off, a few streets above, for there she had to alight, as it was the nearest point to the school, Lafe was still trying to sell his "fish" to the people in the car.

Kitty was still laughing, and Jack seemed to be in a merry mood.

With pleasure he had observed the glum and angry look given him by Kid Kennedy and seen how the committee, which had expected to have such "fun" with Lafe, was having the tables turned on it. And he laughed heartily again, with a feeling of satisfaction, as he walked by the side of Kitty Percival in the direction of her school.

CHAPTER II.

THE ANONYMOUS LETTER.

Jack Lightfoot had come to Seagirt Academy from Cranford but a few days before, being followed shortly by Lafe Lampton, Jack's object in entering this excellent preparatory school being to fit himself for college.

The principal of the school was Professor Phineas Chubb, and he had for assistant Professor Titus Lazenby, with both of whom the reader became acquainted in the preceding story.

A thing had happened shortly after Jack's arrival at the academy which tended to prejudice him in the minds of the principal and his assistant.

There had been a fight, not of Jack's choosing, in one of the dormitory rooms, in which Jack had fought and whipped Kid Kennedy. Jack had been lured to that room by protestations of friendship, and by an invitation to a "spread." On going there he had found Kennedy, Sid Percival, Julian Glaze, and Ben Birkett, with others, enjoying a feast which had been provided by money obtained from Jack by deceit.

Then Jack had been forced into the fight with Kid Kennedy.

He had the grim satisfaction of knowing afterward that Kid Kennedy and the latter's friends had been taught something of a lesson, which they much needed.

One result of that fight had been to make Kid Kennedy Jack's bitterest enemy at Seagirt. Kennedy had not liked Jack before that, but now the feeling was hate.

Another result of the fight had not been pleasant for Jack. Being the last to leave the room when an alarm was sounded, he had been seen in the corridor, as he tried to escape, by Professor Chubb and Professor Lazenby.

In addition, some one had recklessly butted his head into the fat and protuberant stomach of Professor Chubb. The thing had been done in the darkness, and Chubb was inclined to hold that against Jack, though the latter had denied all knowledge of it.

Such was the condition of things, with suspicions and charges hanging over Jack Lightfoot, when, on the morning in which the present story opens, Professor Chubb received this communication:

"PROFESSOR CHUBB: Jack Lightfoot was overheard on the campus yesterday afternoon boasting of the fact that he had struck you in the stomach, when he came out of that corridor in the dormitory. I have understood that he claims the thing was done by Kid Kennedy or Sid Percival; and that you may really know who did it I write this. As I do not care to gain his enmity, I think I had better sign myself merely as
"A FRIEND."

Professor Chubb found this lying on the desk of his room at the academy, and, hooking his big glasses over his big nose, he read it carefully, with a frown.

He did not recognize the handwriting.

"Smoot!" called Professor Chubb impatiently, looking toward the door.

When this was not immediately answered he banged the thick palm of his hand down on a silver call-bell which rested on his desk, and a young man came in hurriedly, rubbing his eyes as if he had been asleep.

"Yes, sir," he said, standing before the desk.

Gregory Smoot, who now stood before Professor Chubb, was the young man whom Jack had met at the entrance to this room when he first came to the academy. Smoot was the watch-dog that guarded the approaches to Professor Chubb, and as a sort of livery he was dressed in blue. He held his blue cap now in his hand, and stood at attention before the high desk.

"Smoot," said the professor, "did you see any one come into this room a minute or so ago?"

"No, sir," Smoot answered.

It may be said here, to save the trouble of saying it elsewhere, that Gregory Smoot was often called by the students, with much disrespect, "Snoot," instead of Smoot; and it was not an inapt name, for his nose was even more prominent than that of the professor.

And another thing worth mentioning is, that it was notorious throughout the academy that Smoot could not keep awake more than an hour or so at a time, unless matters of great importance pressed on his mind. His was not an alert brain, as may be imagined. But he was not one of the students, and not much brains were required to do the things he was set to accomplish.

"You're sure that no one came into this room a minute or so ago, while I was absent from it?" Chubb insisted.

He looked inquiringly at Smoot's sleepy eyes.

"Quite sure, sir."

"You weren't asleep, as usual, out in the hall?"

"No, sir."

"You're positive of that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then how did this communication come to be on my desk?" Chubb demanded. "It was not here when I went out, and when I came back I found it. Some one placed it here, and, to do so, had to get into the room, and to get into the room had to come through that hall where you were. Smoot, I find you have been sleeping again at your post of duty. Remember, sir, if this occurs but once more I shall discharge you."

"Yes, sir," said Smoot.

He had heard that threat every day, and sometimes more than once a day, and it had lost its ability to frighten him.

"Yes, sir," he repeated, standing before the desk and ducking.

"No one passed you in the hall?"

"I didn't see any one, sir."

"You didn't see Mr. Kennedy out there?"

"No, sir."

"Nor Mr. Percival?"

"No, sir."

"You may go, and send in Professor Lazenby."

Lazenby was as different in every way from Professor Chubb as can be imagined. He was lean and dry, with dusty hair. His black clothing looked as if it had hung for years in some dry and dusty closet. The students often spoke of him as "Professor Dry-as-dust," and the name was more befitting than "Snoot" was for the call-boy and servant who had just quitted the room.

When Lazenby came into the room and stood before the high desk Chubb again hooked his big glasses on his nose and fired at him much the same questions; and then showed him the letter.

Chubb had flushed rosily, for the recollection of that heavy punch in the stomach was not a pleasant one.

"You know that Jack Lightfoot has denied all knowledge of that," he said, as Lazenby glanced at the letter. "So, what do you think of this?"

"It's anonymous, sir," said Lazenby.

"So I observed."

"And an anonymous communication is always a cowardly one, written by some one who fears to back his words."

"My opinion exactly, Lazenby; you have expressed my exact thought."

"I do not recognize the handwriting," said Lazenby, squinting at the letters. "It is disguised, no doubt."

"And the wish of the one who sent it, Lazenby?"

"To injure Jack Lightfoot."

"Would Percival, or Kennedy, have sent it?"

"They might, sir."

"But you cannot identify the handwriting?"

"No, sir."

"Very good, Lazenby. Send in Smoot again."

When Gregory Smoot reappeared Professor Chubb despatched him in search of Jack Lightfoot.

Thus it came about that Jack discovered that such a note had been written, and was given a chance to see it; and he stored the peculiarity of the handwriting in his retentive memory.

"I shall not ask you, Mr. Lightfoot, if you did the thing which is here charged against you," said Chubb, "for you have already told me you did not; but I will ask you if there is any student who, in your opinion, would thus seek to injure you?"

"I couldn't name any one," was his answer.

"You have some enemies here?"

"There are some students here who may, perhaps, not like me."

"Will you name them?"

"I should prefer not to. It might turn suspicion against the wrong ones, you will see."

Chubb studied the face of the youth before him. He had not learned to like Jack Lightfoot. Jack's entrance into the academy seemed to have been a disturbing influence. He recalled that when he had questioned Jack concerning the fellows who had been at that "feast," Jack had refused to give names, just as now. Nor had Jack explained in a satisfactory manner

why he had been in that room, and why he had been engaged in a fight there.

Discipline was a thing which Chubb demanded, and he had hinted to Jack that if he did not answer questions asked him he might be dismissed from the academy.

But now, as he studied Jack's open, manly face, his honest bearing, and his general air of self-respect, Chubb did not force the question.

He merely said:

"Mr. Lightfoot, I shall investigate this matter. Discipline is a thing that must be maintained at this academy. I will admit that I do not attach much significance to any anonymous communication, for it seems to me that the fellow who is enough of a coward to send an anonymous letter is coward enough to lie in what he says in it. But at the same time, I am free to say that I do not like the stubbornness which you show, and have shown, when I have asked you questions. I do not approve of this so-called 'code of honor' which students hold, which prevents them giving the name of a student who may have violated the laws of the academy."

When Jack went out, he encountered Lafe Lampton.

Not an hour before, Lafe had been "fishing" on top of that trolley-car, and Jack had been in the company of Kitty Percival.

"Did he skin you?" Lafe asked anxiously.

"No."

"More examinations?"

"I think not."

"Well, say, there are going to be some more for me! I don't know yet whether I belong here or not. I'm already conditioned in Greek and physics. If I fail, back to the woods for me."

Yet Lafe did not seem to be alarmed at the outlook.

Jack hooked his arm in Lafe's, and, as they walked away together, he told Lafe of the anonymous letter.

"Jiminy crickets!" said Lafe. "That was a cowardly trick!"

"Who is the coward?"

"Kid Kennedy, or Sid Percival."

"Or, perhaps, Ben Birkett," Jack suggested.

CHAPTER III.

BEN BIRKETT.

When Jack had encountered Ben Birkett in that room in the dormitory where the fight with Kid Kennedy afterward took place, and saw that Birkett was

one of the leading spirits, he reached the natural conclusion that Birkett was a student at the academy.

Later, he discovered that this was not so. Birkett was stopping in Seagirt, and had become acquainted with Kennedy and some others who were students, and had been by them invited to that "feast."

It was Birkett's desire to involve Jack Lightfoot in trouble. Hence he and some others had accused Jack of stealing a pair of skates that had not been stolen at all; and, on the strength of it, they had attacked Jack out by the skating pond, with a result to themselves which was far from satisfactory.

It had been as much of a surprise to Lafe Lampton as to Jack, to learn that Ben Birkett was in Seagirt.

True, being a rolling stone since his departure from Cranford, where he had been a student for a time, and, until run out of the place by Jack Lightfoot, Birkett was as likely to appear in Seagirt as anywhere else.

Birkett, it seemed, had secured a position in an office in Seagirt. That he was dishonest to the core, Jack knew; but did not consider it his place to say so to any one; nor would he seek to put a straw in Birkett's way, if the latter had turned over a new leaf and was now honestly striving to live a decent life.

Birkett might, had he been wise, have taken a lesson from the past, and so have let Jack Lightfoot severely alone. But hatred of Jack, whom he accused wrongfully of being the author of all his misfortunes, would not permit him to do that.

Another whom Birkett hated almost as much as he did Jack was Lafe Lampton, merely because Lafe had always been Jack's friend and had stood by him through thick and thin.

Birkett was resolved to disgrace and humiliate them both; yet how to do it was the thing that troubled him.

Lafe had separated from Jack on the campus, and, not ten minutes later, he encountered Birkett out near the street-car line. There was a sudden flash of Lafe's sky-blue eyes, when he met Birkett.

"See here, Birkett," he said, roughly, "why did you send an anonymous note to Professor Chubb about Jack? That was a low-down, dirty trick; and if you hadn't been a sneak and a coward you wouldn't have done it."

Lafe did not know certainly that Birkett had sent the note, but the thought that perhaps Birkett had done so became almost a belief as soon as he saw him.

Birkett flushed so guiltily that Lafe knew he had struck home.

"There's no use to deny it," said Lafe, when Birkett

flushed. "I know that you sent it. What did you do it for?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," Birkett answered.

"Keep away from me!" he added, as Lafe advanced. But Lafe stepped up to him, with fists clenched.

"Birkett," he cried, and his white teeth gleamed, while his blue eyes glowed, "you made trouble for Jack over in Cranford, and you're starting in to make trouble for him here; but just remember that the thing won't go!"

"Why, I'm not afraid of *you*!" blustered Birkett, at the same time backing away.

"You sent that anonymous letter!"

"I didn't."

"You won't deny to me that you've tried to injure Jack?"

"Hasn't he injured me—ruined me?" Birkett flashed back.

"You seem to be wearing pretty good clothes, and to have a good position here. I don't see how he has ruined you."

"But see what he did for me at Cranford!"

"You mean what you did for yourself. You tried to get him into trouble there, and when your meanness was exposed you were mighty quick to get out of the school and out of the town. Even your own father saw that you had been in the wrong and threw you overboard."

"He merely thought I was in the wrong," Birkett fumed, growing white in the face. "Jack Lightfoot made him believe that; or the things Jack said, or reported, made him believe it. I left home, and roamed about, and——"

"And began to drink and to make a jackass of yourself generally."

"It was all Jack Lightfoot's fault," Birkett insisted.

"That you drank and made an idiot of yourself?"

"It was his fault that I got into trouble; and I drank because I was in trouble."

"And went to the dogs generally," said Lafe.

"I managed to live," said Birkett. "And now I'm here, and have got this position, and am doing well enough. Then you and Jack Lightfoot had to come here, and——"

"Would that hurt you?"

"Well, yes; for you two will be sure to blab of what you know, and of what you think you know, and I'll get into trouble with the men I'm working for. I expect to receive notice to quit any day, since you fellows have showed up here."

His tone was bitter.

Lafe unclenched his fists and thrust his hands down into his trousers pockets.

"See here, Birkett," he began, "you don't know Jack Lightfoot, and you don't know me, if you think we're that kind. Jack would be the last person in the world to say a word to injure you, and I would. If you feared Jack for what he might tell about you, why didn't you keep away from him? Why did you go to kicking up trouble for him as soon as he came here?"

"Because he has injured me," Birkett replied savagely.

"And you intend to keep it up?"

Birkett hesitated.

"It's nothing to you whether I do or not," he said, temporizing. "You just keep out of my road and I won't trouble *you*, that's all."

Lafe's hands came out of his pockets, and were clenched again.

"It's not all, Birkett," he warned. "When you mix with Jack you mix with me. I'm giving you fair warning, understand. If you're wise you'll drop out of this whole business. You'll let Jack alone."

"You don't think that you and Jack can come here and not have the students play horse with you?" said Birkett, with a sneer.

"Of course not; but you're not one of the students. We'll stand things from them that we wouldn't stand from an outsider."

"Bah! What will you do?" said Birkett contemptuously, though he still backed away.

"What will I do?" Lafe shouted, his voice ringing again. "I'll hammer your face in!"

"Bah!" sneered Birkett, still retreating.

But when Lafe seemed about to begin that face-hammering work right then and there, he broke into a run, and hastened to catch the trolley-car that, to his great relief, came whizzing just then along the track.

CHAPTER IV.

BEN BIRKETT TRAPPEL.

Shortly after the noon hour Ben Birkett was back in the vicinity of the academy, and he was hoping to secure a private interview with Jack.

Though Birkett had secured a position with a reputable firm in the town of Seagirt, and received fair pay for his work, he was always in chronic need of money, due to gambling and his expensive habits.

Having heard that Jack's father had recently returned home with a fortune, and supposing from that

circumstance that Jack was now rolling in wealth, he had been wondering how he could get his fingers on some of Jack's money.

"I've been a good deal of a fool, I guess. If a fellow could only see ahead a little while it would be a big thing for him," was Birkett's thought, as he stood out by the trolley-track, before venturing toward the academy gates. "I might have been one of Jack Lightfoot's best friends, and so have been in a position to pull his leg now; but a fellow can never tell what's going to happen. I seem to have been born unlucky."

He kicked angrily at a projecting root that lay in his path.

"I had to play the fool there in Cranford, and antagonize him. But how could I guess that he was going to be rich some day? He was as poor as poverty, then."

That had been Jack's chief offense, in the eyes of Birkett, in those old days which he now so much regretted. At that time Birkett had felt himself to be very much superior to Jack. He had cut rather a wide swathe in Cranford, had flung his money about with a free hand, and had attracted many friends by that method, among them being no less a personage than Ned Skeen.

Jack had been poor, and his family poor. And chiefly because of that Birkett had scorned him; and later, when Jack opposed him in various ways, Birkett had sought to ruin Jack's reputation by committing a crime himself and trying to have it laid on Jack.

The villainy had been exposed, and Birkett had been compelled to get out of the school and leave the town very hastily.

Even his own father would not stand for what he had done, and, a quarrel resulting, Birkett had left home, and since then had been gaining a precarious living in devious ways.

All these things embittered Birkett now, especially against Jack Lightfoot.

"Still, I was a fool," was his reflection. "I might have stood in with him. I bet Lafe Lampton's getting the money out of him now all right! I would if I was Lafe; I'd milk him dry. Say, wouldn't I swell it, if I had the chance that Jack's got now?"

He glanced up at the academy buildings.

"If things had gone different I might have been in this academy myself, if I'd wanted to, instead of having to spend my time in that beastly place down-town. A fellow is all right, if he's got money. If he hasn't money he isn't anything."

A desire for money—some of Jack's money—was

luring him on. He recalled his talk with Lafe, and knew Lafe was sure now that he—Birkett—had sent that anonymous letter. He expected exposure to follow; and, if exposure must come, he wanted to profit by it. He wondered how Lafe knew he was the guilty person.

Having entered the academy grounds, he made his way toward the dormitory in which he knew Jack had a room. He was familiar with the location of that room, even though he had never been to it, having gained that knowledge on the night of the "feast" to which Jack had been inveigled.

He walked slowly now, glancing about. The grounds of the academy were usually open to all comers, but the dormitories and other places could not be so readily entered.

Moreover, Birkett did not care to be seen entering that particular dormitory.

"He may be at some lecture or other," was his thought. "But I can wait for him."

When no one seemed to be looking, he slipped into the lower hall of the dormitory, and then began to ascend the stairs to the floor above, on which Jack's room was located.

The corridors there were vacant, and he made his way along them without trouble.

By a chance Jack Lightfoot came from the other direction at about this time, having had another interview with Professor Chubb about that anonymous letter.

Birkett glided up to him with soft steps.

"Lightfoot," he said smoothly, yet somewhat anxiously, "I'd like just a few words with you in your room."

Jack looked at him somewhat coldly.

"I don't know that I care to have a talk with you, Birkett."

"But this is a matter of importance to you," Birkett insisted.

"Come in, then, and say what you've got to say."

Jack unlocked the door, and entered first, with Birkett close behind him.

"I haven't much time to spend, Birkett," he said, "for I've some lessons to get, and must prepare some papers. I find I'm a little behind in some things, and must do extra work to catch up."

"It won't take long to say all that I've got to spin," Birkett urged.

"Go ahead," said Jack.

His manner showed that he was not pleased by this

intrusion. There was bad blood between Birkett and himself, and he did not try to conceal the fact.

"Go ahead," he repeated, when Birkett hesitated.

"I suppose you've got it in for me," said Birkett, "for what happened at that spread the other night; but you ought to know I wasn't to blame for that."

"Is that what you came up here to say?" Jack asked sharply.

"Not altogether; I've got some other things to say, but I wanted you to understand that, in the first place."

"I don't see what right you had to be there at all. You're not a student here."

"I was invited by a student, and that made it all right, it seems to me."

"Well, go on; and remember that I haven't much time to spare."

"There's no good reason why we can't get along smoothly, now that I'm in Seagirt and you're here. There's no need of our scrapping; and, perhaps, I can help you."

"You haven't shown much desire in that line," Jack reminded.

"No, I haven't, I'll confess. I've started out wrong. But I had a talk with Lafe Lampton this morning, and——"

"What about?"

"That's what I'm going to tell you, if you'll let me."

"Go on, then."

"As I said, we might as well be friends as enemies. I'm willing to be your friend, if——"

"I don't care to enter into any alliance with you, Birkett!"

"Well, we needn't fight each other."

"That's true enough. I'll not trouble you, if you don't trouble me."

"We might let bygones be bygones, you know; and, perhaps, by and by we'd come to a better understanding," urged Birkett, thinking of Jack's changed financial condition.

"If you've got anything special to say, Birkett, say it. I'm in a hurry, you know."

"Well," said Birkett, coming to the point at once, "it's about that anonymous letter!"

If a gust of wintry wind had not shaken the windows of the dormitory and rattled the branches of the trees, both Jack and Birkett might have heard a movement of surprise in the corridor beyond that closed door. As it was, they did not hear it.

Gregory Smoot had come along that corridor, just as Ben Birkett was vanishing into the doorway of Jack's room; and Smoot, being of a suspicious nature

and inclined to think that Jack had been guilty of far more than any one knew, took this as proof of his suspicions, and slipped noiselessly to the door, where he had stood listening.

Smoot had lost his sleepy-eyed air, and was sufficiently wide-awake now.

When the mention of the anonymous letter came, of which he had heard so much that day, he started with surprise; and then he backed softly from the door, and with the silence of a mouse slipped along the corridor.

He was running before he was out of the corridor, and his swiftly moving feet took him quickly to the office of Professor Chubb, into which he plunged without ceremony.

Chubb stared, and then frowned.

"Smoot," he said severely, "are you going to force me to discharge you instantly?"

"The anonymous letter, sir!" cried Smoot, his blue cap in his hands, as he ducked and bowed before Chubb.

Chubb half rose in his chair.

"Eh? What?"

"The anonymous letter, sir!"

"It is here on my desk, Smoot."

"So it is, sir; but they're talking about it; and I came as quick as I could, sir—to tell you, sir."

"Of whom do you speak, Smoot?" said Chubb, betraying excitement.

"Mr. Lightfoot, sir; and a stranger, sir. They're in his room, sir; at this minute, sir."

"In Mr. Lightfoot's room?"

"Yes, sir."

Chubb lifted his thick form out of the deep chair.

"So I hastened to tell you, sir; thinking you'd want to know, sir."

"They're there now?"

"Yes, sir. I came as quick as I could, sir."

"You should say as quickly as you could, Smoot!"

"Yes, sir; I came as quickly as I could, sir."

He started toward the door.

"Will you go, sir?"

"Lead the way, Smoot, and with caution; perhaps we can get to hear what is being said. So, Mr. Lightfoot is the one who sent that anonymous letter, is he? I was not prepared to believe it; but—well, lead the way, Smoot."

Smoot was already leading the way; and he led so rapidly that Professor Chubb was out of breath by the time they gained the corridor near Jack's room, and had to stop there, panting and puffing.

"That's his room, sir!" Smoot whispered. "Can you go on, sir? I think they're in there yet, sir."

They were still in there when Smoot led his excited employer up to the door.

Birkett, after some prefaces and preambles, had confessed that it was he who had put the anonymous letter on Chubb's desk; and Jack had just broken into a torrent of rage because of it.

"Why, you scoundrel, why do you come to me with that?" he was demanding. "And why did you write that anonymous letter, accusing me to Professor Chubb?"

"It was a mistake for me to do that," Birkett confessed, trying to keep his temper, and still thinking of Jack's money. "And now you see why I have come to you."

"No, I don't see! I think you'll have to explain that!"

"Well, the thing has put you in a hole, you see; but I can get you out of it. You don't like Kid Kennedy."

"I haven't said I didn't."

"But I know that much."

"Kennedy put you up to that dirty work, did he?"

"The point is, that I can clear you and lay the blame on Kennedy."

"How?" said Jack, willing to hear what new duplicity this young rascal would be guilty of, if he got a chance.

"I'll go to that fool professor, and I'll tell him that I know all about it; and I'll make him believe that Kennedy wrote the anonymous note and placed it on his desk, and——"

"When you did it yourself?" said Jack.

"I'll make Professor Chubb believe that Kennedy wrote it, and I'll tell him it was Kennedy's head that poked that big belly of his and knocked him down in the corridor that night. If I do that it will be all up with Kennedy, see?"

"Why will you do this? Don't you claim Kennedy as your friend?"

"I've come to the conclusion that I'd rather stand in with you, you see; and——"

"Go ahead," said Jack impatiently, when Birkett hesitated.

"And I thought, perhaps, you'd be willing to pay me well for it. I'm in need of money—in fact, I'm horribly in debt. I don't know which way to turn to get hold of a little money; and now you've got cords of it—money to burn! So I thought that maybe if I turned that trick for you, you'd be willing to cough up a pretty good wad, enough to put me for awhile on Easy Street."

"And you'd sell Kennedy out in that way?"

"To help you, you understand!" Birkett urged.

"Birkett," said Jack, and his voice trembled, "there's the door; get out of it before I kick you through it!"

His face flamed with anger.

"But——"

"Get right out of this room, before I kick you out; and if you come to me again with——"

Birkett backed toward the door.

"But——" he began.

Thump! thump! thump!

The sounds were made by Professor Chubb's fat fist hammering on the door panels. The professor was in a wild rage.

"Open this door!" he roared.

Birkett looked excitedly round the room, and at the window; but he knew it was a long jump from that window to the ground. Then he turned to the door; and, before Jack could say anything, or even make up his mind what to do, Birkett had thrown the door open and was trying to get out into the corridor.

Chubb was right in front of the door, and Smoot right behind the professor; and as Birkett made his dash he ran heavily into Chubb, bowling him over.

In his fall the fat professor went backward on Smoot, fairly crushing him into the floor; and Smoot, to protect himself, and for the further reason that he hardly knew what he was doing, reached up and began to claw at Chubb's fat sides.

Chubb believed that he had been thrown down and attacked by the boy who had dashed out of the room; and now, with a roar of rage, he began to strike back with his elbows, thus hammering Smoot.

"You scoundrel!" Chubb was roaring. "You young rascal! Call me that 'fool professor,' will you? and then knock me down and try to scratch me? Why, sir, I'll crush you! that's what I'll do—crush you!"

Jack had leaped to the door, and stood there bewildered. He did not know how much or how little the professor had heard of that conversation, but he feared that only enough had been heard to make it seem that he had been bargaining in some corrupt way with Birkett. Birkett was running along the corridor and would soon be out of sight.

The professor was hammering Smoot with his heavy elbows, and Smoot was scratching like a wildcat.

"Let go of me!" howled Chubb. "You scoundrel, let go of me! If you don't let go of me——"

He twisted, like a turtle thrown on its back, and kicked out with his legs and arms. From beneath him Smoot was bellowing for mercy.

Jack would have laughed, in spite of all, if he had dared to.

Instead, he stepped up to the kicking and writhing pair.

"Let me assist, you, sir!" he said; and he caught one of Chubb's flailing hands; and then, with some difficulty, helped him to rise.

"That young rascal that dashed out of this room, assaulted me, and——"

Chubb stopped in his panting accusation, for he saw Smoot rise, limp and crushed, from the floor.

"Why—ah—ahem—— Why, bless my soul—is that you, Smoot?"

"I think you've killed me, sir!" said Smoot, doubling himself up. "You weigh a good many stone, sir; especially when you fall as you did then, sir."

Even in his pain and humiliation he was still Smoot the humble.

"Can I aid you, sir?" said Jack, beginning to brush some of the corridor dust from the black clothing of the professor. "I hope you're not hurt."

"I think I'm killed, sir," groaned Smoot lugubriously.

Chubb's face was as red as fire, and sweat stood out all over it.

"That was a ridiculous mistake," he said, speaking to Jack. "But I—I wish to know now who the youth was who was in this room—the youth who burst out of it in that unceremonious manner and——"

He stopped, panting for breath.

"His name is Birkett," said Jack.

"He is—is not a student?"

"No, sir; he works in some office down-town."

"I heard what he said," continued Chubb. "I heard his accusation—I mean his statement, that I am a 'fool professor'; and if he were a student it would go hard with him for saying that."

"I hope you heard the other things he said," Jack remarked.

"I did, sir. I heard him say that he wrote the anonymous note that I found on my desk this morning, and that he knew who struck me in—in the stomach that night, in the corridor. His name is Birkett, you say! I shall have an interview with him, sir; I shall have an interview with him before the afternoon is over."

"Professor," said Jack, speaking respectfully. "I am glad you heard that. I did not invite him here, nor did I ask him to make those statements; yet I'm glad now that he did, and that you heard him."

"Just so, sir," said Chubb, still breathing heavily.

Smoot had now begun the task of brushing the

remaining dust from the professor's clothing, working away as energetically as the porter of a Pullman who expects a good tip, and oblivious now to the fact that but a little while before Chubb had been holding him against the floor with crushing weight, and the two had been "scrapping" in right lively fashion.

"I understand now that you are innocent of that anonymous letter charge—by which I mean to say, sir, that I know you did not strike me in the corridor—I mean in the stomach, in the corridor, that night. You don't know who it was did that?"

"No, sir," was Jack's answer.

"Well, I'm sure now that it was the fellow who came out of this room with such a rush. I recognized his manner, sir—his manner of striking; for this is the second time that he has struck me in the corridor and knocked me down. And I assure you, sir, that I shall have an interview with him on the subject before the afternoon is finished."

When Chubb went away, Smoot was still brushing at his clothing, following right at his heels, and using his hands as a Pullman porter might use a whisk-broom.

When they were out of sight Jack went back into his room; and then he sat down in a chair by the window, and laughed, and laughed.

CHAPTER V.

POKING THE TIGER.

The time has come to confess that one of the things which caused Jack Lightfoot to seek the company of pretty Kitty Percival was that he might make Kid Kennedy jealous. He did not like Kennedy even a little bit, and he knew how Kennedy hated him. And as Kennedy, who was Sid Percival's chum, had heretofore claimed rather openly that Sid's sister was his "best girl," it pleased Jack to be with her whenever he could, and to let Kennedy know that he was with her.

Jack's motive was not a very elevating one, it is true. He did not stop to ask himself whether it was noble, or otherwise; he simply did it, and it pleased him to see Kennedy writhe.

However, there was another motive, and that was the girl's beauty and her merry manner, together with the fact that she was the only girl in Seagirt with whom he was yet acquainted, an acquaintance brought about by that rescue from the high trestle already mentioned, the details of which were fully set forth in the preceding story.*

Pretty Kitty Percival was a good deal in Jack's mind, in those first days at Seagirt, even when one might have supposed that other matters were giving him all he could think of.

Both the girl and Kid Kennedy were in his mind on the evening of this day, when he set out for the Percival home, intending to see her and ask her for the privilege of her company to the basket-ball game to be played that same evening.

The game was to be between a team from Seagirt Academy and one from Morningside, the latter being a school run on lines similar to those of the academy. Its buildings, with the high tower in the center, could be seen from the academy grounds, across the mouth of the harbor.

Jack had gone early, that he might "beat the time" of Kid Kennedy; and he did; for Kennedy arrived a full quarter-of-an-hour after Jack had been there, and also after Jack had gained the girl's consent to accompany her to the basket-ball game.

Kennedy's dark face took on an angry flush when he entered the sitting-room and beheld Jack Lightfoot there before him. He had caught Jack's voice in the hall, and had heard Kitty Percival talking with him in an extremely animated way.

"Confound the fellow!" he was grumbling to himself as he came into the room. "He's got to be taken down a peg!"

Though Kennedy tried to hide his chagrin and uneasiness, he could not wholly do it. His voice trembled when he answered Kitty Percival's greetings, and he merely growled when Jack spoke to him.

"We're likely to have a great game this evening," said Jack, as coolly and calmly as if he did not know that the youth he was speaking to wanted to "eat him up." "You fellows will put up a big game, of course; and I'm told the Morningside team isn't slow."

"We'll do 'em up, all right!" growled Kennedy, who found it hard to be civil to Jack even here in the sitting-room at the Percivals'.

"Sid says that the academy team is bound to win," Kitty put in.

Her blue eyes were shining mischievously, and she seemed to thoroughly enjoy this. She was a clever and shrewd girl, and she knew as well as these two young fellows just what was in their minds.

"I hope they do win," she added.

"Oh, we'll beat 'em!" Kid growled again.

He twisted uneasily in his chair. Jack, knowing that he had already secured Kitty's consent for her com-

*See "Jack Lightfoot at Seagirt."

pany that evening, could afford to smile at the uneasiness which Kid displayed.

The conversation seemed to have bogged down, and Kitty had to start it again.

"By the way," she said, smiling merrily, and speaking to Kid, "do you boys have feasts in your rooms at the dormitory, as a regular thing of evenings?"

Jack was taken quite as much by surprise by that as Kid was himself. He was not aware that Kitty knew anything about that "feast." Now he was sure her brother had told her something; just how much he could not guess.

Kid Kennedy flushed more hotly than before. He believed that Jack Lightfoot had been telling Kitty of that "feast," and possibly of the fight which followed it, in which Kid had felt the power of Jack's hard knuckles. There was still a slight abrasion on Kid's cheek, marked by a dark scar, which told its own story.

"Oh, we have a feed up there now and then," he answered evasively.

"You had a rather big one the other night, I heard!"

"Where'd you hear all that?" Kid blurted.

"Oh, a little bird told me!"

"What else did you hear?"

Jack waited breathlessly for that answer.

"More than I'll tell. I wish I could have been a mouse and seen that."

Kid twisted uneasily. Did she mean, he asked himself, that she wished she could have beheld the whipping which he had received at the hands of Jack Lightfoot? He looked at Jack, who sat smiling in his chair, and he wanted to choke him.

"Well, I'd like to know just what you heard?" he urged, showing his uneasiness.

Kitty laughed again. It really seemed to Jack that she was grilling Kid for the purpose of seeing him squirm.

"I'll tell you some time, maybe."

"Tell me now."

"Some time; not to-night."

Kid rose. He was in a perspiration. Nor could he hide his annoyance and anger. As he stood up he pulled out his watch and looked at it. For a moment he hesitated. Kitty Percival was a clever girl, and knew what was coming. So, anticipating his request, she remarked, with sweet innocence:

"I'm coming to the game to-night, to see you and your team defeat Morningside. Mr. Lightfoot has promised to take me; and it is really good of him to

do so, don't you think, for Sid has run away somewhere, and I couldn't have gone otherwise?"

Kid Kennedy choked and glared.

"I'm late," he said nervously, buttoning his coat; "and I must be going, or the game will be delayed. Good evening, Miss Percival."

He stalked stiffly from the room, without a word to Jack. Kitty followed him out into the hall, saying something to him, but he merely growled his answers; and then he flung himself out of the house, and Jack heard his feet clumping heavily and angrily on the pavement.

"I think we had better be going ourselves," said Jack, when she came again into the room. "We want to be in time to see the opening of the game."

"Yes," she said, smiling strangely.

And then she got her hat, cloak, and gloves, and prepared quickly for the walk to the car line.

CHAPTER VI.

BASKET-BALL.

Jack Lightfoot would have felt supremely contented, as he walked with Kitty Percival to the car line, but for one thing.

The uncomfortable thought had come to him that perhaps she was merely playing him off against Kid Kennedy to get even with Kid for something the latter had said or done. It was not a pleasant suggestion. He had not forgotten the statement of the boy with whom he had become acquainted on the morning he landed in Seagirt, that Kid Kennedy was Kitty Percival's "beau." It was plain that Kid had come to the house expecting to take Kitty to the basket-ball game at Morningside. Jack had "got ahead of him." Why had Kitty permitted that? Jack would have felt much better if he could have answered this in a manner satisfactory to himself.

But, whatever motive had urged Kitty Percival to treat Kid Kennedy as she had done, whether it was because she liked Jack better than Kid, or for any other reason, Jack could not feel depressed even by that thought; for the girl was too bright, too talkative, and altogether too charming, to let him feel in that humor long.

"Sid told you something about that feed at the dormitory?" he asked, as they stood together waiting for the car.

"Now, Mr. Lightfoot, I'm not going to answer that!" she said imperiously. "I've said that a little bird told me, and I'll stick to it."

"The little bird's name was Sid, I think."

"Oh, was it? You're an awfully good guesser, I'm sure!"

Jack could get no more than that, though he returned to the attack two or three times.

The game was to be played in the gymnasium at Morningside; and when they arrived they found most of the seats already taken. The gymnasium room was large. All the paraphernalia had been removed from it in preparation for the game, and the colors of Morningside were looped and twined everywhere—yellow and black. The colors of Seagirt were red and white, which Jack liked better; yet he still preferred the colors of Cranford—white and blue.

Scarcely was Jack seated with Kitty Percival in a position to give them a good view of the game, when the Morningside team came running into the room with the big ball, and began to "warm up" by tossing it to and fro, and making efforts to cage it in the baskets.

They were a husky set of young fellows, and from the manner in which they moved about, Jack was led to the conclusion that if Seagirt defeated them it would be no walkover. And now he recalled another thing, told him by the boy who had given him so much information, to the effect that there was bad blood between the two schools.

The Morningside players were greeted with considerable applause.

Then another roar broke out, as the Seagirt team came into the room and took their turn with the ball and the baskets. Kitty Percival joined in the hand-clapping; and Jack Lightfoot, as a Seagirt student, did the same, though he felt that he could not very well like the fellows who made up the Seagirt team. Among them he saw Kid Kennedy, who was the captain, together with Julian Glaze and Sid Percival. Across the breast of each was a strip of ribbon or cloth, of red and white, with the word SEAGIRT on it in big letters.

Jack saw Kid Kennedy's eyes rove round the room until they located Kitty Percival. When Jack saw that Kid had noticed him he waved his hand to the fellow, and laughed when he observed the black frown that came to Kennedy's face. Kitty laughed, too.

"Kid is chewing nails to-night," she observed.

"Why?" Jack asked, with an innocent air.

"You know, all right," she answered. "It's because I'm with you here to-night."

"What right has he to object to that?" Jack inquired.

"I shan't take the trouble to enlighten you, if you're not good at guessing."

Then she waved her handkerchief to her brother Sid, whose eye she had caught; and laughed again, when she observed Sid's stare of displeasure.

"Does Sid object, too?" Jack asked.

Kitty apparently did not choose to answer that; for she broke out with loud hand-clapping.

"That was fine!" she declared, referring to one of the Seagirt fellows who had put the ball in the basket at that moment. "If he can only do as well when the game is on. You know him, I suppose? That's Julian Glaze."

"I've met him," said Jack, a deal of meaning in his tone.

"And now they're going to begin the game," she cried jubilantly, as the referee came into the arena, and the hand-clapping became a whirlwind of sound, in which there were many shouts and whistling calls.

"Seagirt has the better team, you think?" Jack asked her.

"We've got to believe it has, until we are forced to think otherwise," she answered loyally, and again joined in that tumult of hand-clapping.

Off on the opposite side Jack beheld Lafe Lampton, who was leaning forward in his seat and applauding vigorously. Lafe had already "spotted" Jack, and now waved a hand to him, and in that hand he held an apple.

A minute later the game opened up—Kid Kennedy and a tall fellow of the opposing team standing near together in the center of the room, and the referee tossing the ball up between them and then blowing his whistle.

The Morningside player struck the big ball first, sending it toward the Seagirt end of the room; and then the game was on, with the ball flying here and there, each side striving to get it and to put it in the basket of their antagonists.

Jack almost forgot his special view-point of Kid Kennedy in the interest with which he now watched the game; and whenever a brilliant, or even a good, play was made by any man of the academy team, he joined in the cheering.

Seagirt was first to put the ball in the basket, and a furore of applause rose from the Seagirt adherents; Kitty Percival clapping her hands so vigorously that she threatened to split her gloves. But she had a right to be pleased, for Sid Percival was the youth who had caged the ball.

Again the ball went up in the center of the room between two players, and once more the battle for its possession raged all round the room. It was quick, hot

work, with the ball first in the possession of one side and then in that of the other, some player now and then taking a regular head-and-heels tumble on the hard floor.

The ball went toward the Seagirt end; and then, after a fierce scramble almost under the basket, it shot up and—landed in the basket.

It was the turn of the Morningside backers to applaud wildly.

When the fight was on again, Kid Kennedy secured the ball; but his hands had hardly touched it when he went down, falling heavily and letting the ball shoot away from him. Kid was on his feet at once, and in the midst of the fray again; but a moment or two later, because he violated the rules by holding a player, his team was penalized, and Morningside was given a free trial for goal.

The Morningside player put the ball neatly in the basket; and again the adherents of that side broke out with their applause, and then began to sing, to the tune of "My Maryland:—"

"You've put old Seagirt out ag'in;
Oh, Morningside! Our Morningside!
Old Morningside is bound to win!
Our Morningside! Our Morningside!
You can't be beat, know not defeat;
You down whatever team you meet;
To-night you'll sweep them off their feet!
Oh, Morningside! Our Morningside!"

They sang it with fire and spirit, and ended it with a yell that threatened to lift the roof.

"Too bad!" said Kitty.

"It was," Jack admitted.

A minute later the Seagirt team was again penalized. Julian Glaze had hugged the ball and tried to run with it; and once more a free trial for goal on the part of Morningside put the ball in the basket.

Then Seagirt seemed to get its senses back, and a pretty fight, according to the rules, followed.

But even while the academy backers were applauding a goal, made by Kennedy, the decision came that the goal did not count, for the reason that he had thrown for the basket after dribbling.

The wild hand-clapping of Seagirt stopped abruptly.

"Oh, that's awful!" Kitty exclaimed.

Even to Jack it seemed too bad. His sympathies were with Seagirt; yet he knew that the rules forbade anything of the kind, and he did not doubt the ball had been dribbled, as the officials were in a much better position to see than he was.

If the first half of the game, which resulted in a tie, was fast and furious work, the second half surpassed it. Players of both sides seemed to lose their heads and

violate the rules continually, or else they violated them with the hope that the violations would pass unnoticed; and penalizing was so frequent for a time that the referee's whistle seemed to be shrilling constantly; and as constantly the ball was being tossed up by him for a new start, or one side or the other was being given a free trial for goal.

Much bad blood was being engendered meanwhile, both among the players and the spectators; for it inevitably happens that the players and backers of a side fail, or are unwilling, to admit violations, while ready to accuse their opponents.

The time limit of the game approached, with the two teams running neck-and-neck, and the excitement became feverish.

Then Kid Kennedy, for unnecessary roughness, had his side penalized once more, a free trial for goal being given the opposing team; and Morningside put the ball in the basket, just before the expiration of the game.

Though the ball was put in motion again, the game ended; and because of that violation on Kennedy's part it was apparent that Seagirt had lost, or, at any rate, had given to the opposition that free trial by which the game was won.

Kennedy was furious.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HAZERS.

Jack was tired that night, and in spite of the excitement of the evening and the thoughts of Kitty Percival and Kid Kennedy which would intrude, he fell asleep shortly after going to bed, in his room at the dormitory.

He did not know how long he had been sleeping, but had a feeling that it was but a minute, when he was half aroused by something that seemed to be tickling his nose.

He brushed it away sleepily, and then began to dream that a big spider had descended from the ceiling and was crawling over his nose.

He struck furiously and angrily at this imaginary spider, and was aroused by light laughter.

Opening his eyes with a start of surprise, he saw that there was a light in the room; and then, sitting up in bed, he beheld several gruesome-looking figures, like ghosts, with white sheets drawn round them, and their faces disguised, or covered up.

Though the thing was so startling that at first Jack came near leaping out of bed, he knew almost at once

what this meant. These white figures were students who had "come for him."

"What do you want?" he said blankly.

"You!"

The voice that answered was hoarse, and a white arm, with pointing finger, was leveled at him.

The voice and the arm and hand were Kid Kennedy's, though the voice was disguised.

Kid Kennedy, with some of his friends, had resolved that Jack Lightfoot must have a good "taming," and they were there for that purpose. Kid had been in a wild rage all evening, which accounted in part for the character of the work he had done on the team in the game with Morningside.

His rage was directed against Jack. The latter, coming to the school as a total stranger, had flaunted and set at defiance the requirements of the older students. He had refused to abase himself before them. At the spread in the dormitory-room he had insulted, and then had whipped, Kid Kennedy. Worse than all, to Kid's mind, he had taken Kitty Percival to the basket-ball game, when he must have known that Kid meant to take her himself.

After the game Kid had called his followers about him, and had said something of this—not all of it—to them; and they had agreed that Jack Lightfoot was altogether too "fresh," and that his pride would have to be humbled at once.

Jack stared steadily now at the pointing finger which had been thrust at him.

"What do you intend to do with me?" he demanded.

The start given by that sudden awakening and the discovery of these white-clad figures in his room had not wholly passed. He was fighting for time, that he might get his wits together and know what to do.

"Get out of bed!" Kennedy commanded, disguising his voice.

Jack put up his arms and calmly stretched himself, as if yawning.

"Say, fellows, I'm sleepy," he urged, "and I wish you'd go away! Tackle me again in the morning, if you've got to."

"We've come for you!" all the white-masked figures groaned together.

"But couldn't you put off this funny business until morning? Honest, I'm dead tired and sleepy to-night."

Jack knew they did not intend to put off "this funny business" until morning, nor even for a minute; his only idea in asking them being to annoy them and show them that he was not afraid of them.

"Oh, how I wish Lafe was here!" was his thought.

He did not know that reliable old Lafe had already fallen into the hands of the hazers.

"Get out of that bed!" Kid Kennedy commanded sharply.

"Why, of course, since you insist on it," Jack answered.

He threw back the bedclothing and began to climb out.

At the same time he was watching for some chance to make a dash and escape.

The window of his room, which looked out on the campus, had been opened and then closed, he was sure, for two of the hazers stood close by it, to guard it; and it was impossible for him to get out that way.

"What do you intend to do with me?" he asked again, as he began to dress.

"You are going to your death!" they whispered, pointing ghostly fingers at him.

"He has but a few minutes more to live!" said one solemnly.

"And he heeds it not!" averred another.

Then they all groaned together, making a horrible sound.

"You've got good lungs," said Jack. "If you do that again, Professor Chubb will get after you."

"He dares to mock us?" they whispered.

"Do you know who we are?" Kennedy questioned now.

"I'm guessing that you're a lot of fool students of Seagirt, who think you can scare me by this monkey business!"

"Hear his unseemly levity!" the others whispered.

"Hurry into your clothes," Kennedy ordered.

"My dear Kennedy, I'm hurrying," said Jack, who now recognized the voice.

"This way," Kennedy ordered, as soon as Jack was dressed.

The window over the campus was hoisted softly.

"Now, no noise! If you yell out and raise the faculty it will be the worse for you."

Jack had no intention of yelling out and raising the faculty; but he did wish he could get word to Lafe Lampton.

On the outside of the window a ladder had been raised against the wall, and by this ladder the hazers had ascended to the room.

To make it certain that Jack could not escape, some of the hazers now descended the ladder.

"Follow them!" Kennedy said to him, in that grue-some voice.

Jack did not try to disobey. He poised himself on the window ledge, and then lowered himself to the ladder and so proceeded to the ground, the fellows in the room following right after him.

As his feet touched the ground the hazers below seized him.

"Oh, I'm not going to try to get away!" he declared, as they clung to his arms.

He spoke truly; he had no thought of trying to break away now, having made up his mind not to show fear or fright, or even anxiety. He did not believe they would dare to really harm him.

As soon as they held him fast, a blindfold was slipped over his eyes. Then, with a boy on each side of him, he was led away from the building. He did not know where he went, but believed that they were walking him round and round to bewilder him. At length a door opened, and he was conducted into a room, which he was sure was one of the rooms of the academy.

But when the blindfold was stripped from his eyes he saw that this was not a room which could by any possibility belong to the academy, for it had every appearance of being part of a tumble-down house.

But what surprised Jack beyond measure was the discovery that Lafe Lampton was there ahead of him.

"Hello!" said Lafe, looking at Jack with rather a sickly grin. "Got you, too, did they? I was afraid they would!"

Jack also discovered another thing. The hazers had discarded their ghostly white garments. But they had turned their coats inside out, and now had masks of handkerchiefs, and other materials, over their faces. He did not know who any of them were, with the exception of Kid Kennedy, whose voice he had recognized, but he suspected that Julian Glaze and Sid Percival were of their number.

"They think they're going to have fun with us," said Lafe, with another grin.

He was sitting close by the door, with his hands behind his back and his back to the wall. Cords were on his wrists and ankles.

"Close those cavities leading to your stomachs," said one of the maskers, as Lafe and Jack laughed at the predicament in which they found themselves.

Another of the masked party stepped in front of Jack. It was Julian Glaze.

"Worm of the dust," he said, "we have seen that you think you are great stuff. You have come to Seagirt with your neck stiff with pride."

"It's funny how I could have done so, if I'm a worm!" Jack fired back at him.

"That is your name henceforth—A. Worm; otherwise Angle Worm. Angle Worm, look at me."

"I'm looking at you," Jack answered, yet trying to remain unruffled.

"Forgetting that you are extremely fresh, that what you don't know would make a library that would fill the earth, and that humility and meekness is the proper attitude of a newcomer at Seagirt, you came among us puffed up with pride. It is our business to-night to prick that bubble of pride—that bladder of wind—and teach you just where you belong!"

"Ah-h!" sighed the other disguised youths, breathing hard. "We are to teach him where he belongs!"

Glaze turned about and commanded in a low tone, at this juncture:

"Executioner, the irons!"

The door of another room opened, and out from it came a disguised young fellow carrying a tinsmith's portable furnace, which was glowing hot and held a couple of small rods heated at their points to a white heat.

Jack's flesh crawled a little when he beheld that. He knew how Kennedy hated him, and how he had irritated Kennedy that evening; and, knowing that, he could not be sure that Kennedy would not resort even to cruelty to "get even." He believed that Kid Kennedy was equal to almost any meanness, when his anger was roused.

"Bare his arm!" commanded Glaze, in his hoarse, disguised tone.

Jack's coat sleeve was slipped up, and the sleeve of his shirt opened, both being pushed up now to the elbow, baring his lower arm.

"Angle Worm," said Glaze, "we intend to brand you with the hot irons. We intend to put on that lily-white arm your new name, in big, red letters—A. Worm."

Jack wondered if they would dare attempt anything of the kind.

"You think we do not mean it," said Glaze, assuming a fierce tone, "but you will soon have the opportunity of discovering that we intend to mark you with your new name. Executioner, bring on the hot irons!"

CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE HANDS OF THE HAZERS.

Jack Lightfoot was preparing to make a desperate fight, if these hazers really tried to put into effect their threat of branding him on the arm, when he was startled by a bellow of surprise beside him.

Lafe Lampton, who had been held a prisoner there

much longer than Jack, had in some manner succeeded in freeing himself, and now tumbled through the doorway; and, leaping to his feet like a ball as soon as he was in the yard, he was off like a shot in the darkness.

Jack, though surprised, was about to chase after him, and would have followed those who pursued hard on the heels of Lafe, if the heavy door had not been slammed violently in his face. He could not force it, and it was instantly locked.

A half-dozen fellows were still in the room with him, and as many more had started in chase of Lafe.

"You can't get out," said one of the disguised figures; and again Jack recognized the voice and knew he was being addressed by Kid Kennedy. "So you might as well take it easy. And it won't do you any good to holler, for we're too far from the academy for any one to hear you. Your friend will be caught and dragged back here in a minute."

Jack was almost certain that this would be the case, for when Lafe had gone through the doorway he had seen cords on Lafe's ankles. Lafe had slipped the cords from his wrists, but not from his ankles, before he began his flight. No doubt he had feared discovery, if he began to work with the cords that held his ankles.

For a moment Jack was about to dash upon Kennedy and strike him down. Then he saw how hopeless would be the attempt to fight those fellows. They were six to one.

He glanced about, searching for a window, and for the instant contemplating the hurling to the floor of the lamp, knowing that if he thus fired the building he might be given an opportunity to get away. Then the reaction came, and with it a change in his attitude. Whatever these hazers might do, he did not as yet care to resort to measures so desperate.

In thus looking about he observed that the tin-smith's furnace, with the glowing coals and heated rods, had been removed from the room. The door of that other room, into which these things had been hurried, was locked, and one of the disguised youths stood by it as guard.

At the barred window stood two more. The others were over by the door through which Lafe had escaped, and were standing in listening attitudes. Jack now listened, too, fearing to hear some sound which would indicate Lafe's capture.

In a little while feet were heard outside, and the door was opened from within.

"He got away!" was panted from the outside. "I don't know how he got the cords from his feet, but he jumped round the house here, and, before we could

come up to him, he had freed his feet and was running like a rabbit."

Jack laughed. That picture of fat Lafe Lampton running like a rabbit was funny enough.

"Silence!" said Kennedy sternly.

"Lafe seems to have been too much for you!" Jack flung at him as a taunt.

"But just remember that you're not free!" were the words with which Kennedy came back at him.

Others of the pursuing party appeared before the door with the same story. The lamp in the room had been turned down to keep its light from streaming too far out into the darkness. Kennedy turned round to Jack, after ordering those outside to come in.

"Angle Worm," he said, "though the other prisoner has escaped we still have you, and you're the one we really wanted."

They gathered round Jack.

"Put out your hands!" was commanded.

"What if I refuse to obey?"

"Put out your hands!"

"I refuse to obey!"

One of the fellows at Jack's side threw himself on him; and though Jack, with a swing of the fist, landed him up against the wall, it was not possible to fight successfully with the ten or a dozen husky fellows who now piled on him, and, literally dragging him down, overpowered him.

Jack ceased to struggle when he saw he could gain nothing by it.

"It's all right!" he said.

He put his back against the wall and held out his hands.

"I intended that you should force me to do this. I want to put all the blame on you, so that if there's a reckoning about it the blame will fall where it belongs."

Kennedy laughed harshly.

"So, you surrender, eh?"

"Always, when I can't fight any longer. Do whatever you want. I'm not afraid of you."

"Oh, you ain't?" Kennedy snarled, his voice again showing rage and hate. "You'll sing another tune, my fine young buck, before we get through with you."

He threw the noose of a small rope round Jack's wrists, drew it tight, and knotted it.

Then he proceeded to tie him further, Jack making no resistance.

Having done that he again put a blindfold over Jack's eyes.

"Executioner," he bawled now, with manifest impatience, "bring on the irons!"

Jack's flesh had crawled a little when that furnace had been brought in before; but when he heard it being carried in now he showed not a sign of nervousness. He had discovered that whatever they might do, these young fellows would not brand him on the arm, or anywhere else. And he knew it solely from the fact that they had blindfolded him. There was no need to blindfold him to keep him from seeing their faces, which were masked; so the only other reason, Jack was sure, was to keep him from seeing the deception which they now meant to practise on him.

"Angle Worm," said Kennedy, "because in your manner since coming to Seagirt you have denied that you are an Angle Worm, we intend now to brand your name on your arm—A. Worm—so that you may never hereafter have any doubt on the subject. We do not intend that any freshy of your caliber shall come to this place and consider that he is It."

He stopped, to give this weight; then said sharply: "Executioner, do your duty!"

Jack felt his shoulders and arms clutched; then heard a hissing of one of the irons as it was taken from the furnace and plunged into water; and the next instant he recoiled with a shock from what seemed to be a frightful burn. Something which to his imagination felt as he fancied the touch of that white hot iron would feel had touched the bare flesh of his arm and was tracing the letters of the name given—A. Worm.

Jack braced himself against that shock; but, as he did so, he recalled that he had read or heard somewhere that a piece of ice, applied when the victim was unable to see, would, to the excited imagination, produce a sensation which he would ascribe to the burn of a hot iron.

And as that thought came to him, with its certainty and its feeling of relief, he broke into wild laughter, that may have been a bit hysterical, but which was certainly startling to the young hazers who were trying to frighten him.

They had expected him to show fright, to beg piteously, and to scream when that touched his arm. Yet here he was laughing even while they traced that name.

The hazers looked at each other through the holes in their masks. Under his mask, Kid Kennedy's face had flushed hotly. In his hand was the sharpened piece of ice with which he had been tracing those letters on Jack's arm.

"Ha! he laughs," cried Glaze, not knowing what to

say, and dropping back into the flummery used previously. "He laughs at the iron that sears his flesh."

Jack continued to laugh, though he had not recovered from the shock which the touch of the ice had given and his laugh was still a bit hysterical.

"It feels funny, does it?" said Kennedy angrily.

"If you'll take off this blindfold," said Jack, "I should be pleased now to inspect that name which you've written there with ice."

Kid Kennedy dropped the piece of ice to the floor and reached for one of the hot irons in the little furnace.

"You'll discover whether it's ice or not!" he cried, in a rage.

In another moment he would have thrust the white-hot iron against Jack's arm, if Sid Percival had not caught his hand and pushed it back.

"Let up on that!" growled Sid, under his breath.

Kennedy glared at Sid for a moment; then put the rod back in the furnace.

"Fellows," said Jack, "don't you think you've gone about far enough with this nonsense? I'm willing to do any reasonable thing you want me to, but don't you think this is enough for one night?"

"You'll find that we've only begun," said Kennedy fiercely.

"Well, then, would you mind taking this rag off my eyes?"

For reply Kennedy grabbed him roughly by the shoulder.

"To the railroad track with him, fellows! He thinks he can make sport of us! He'll find out different, before we get through with him."

CHAPTER IX.

TIED TO THE TRACK.

Jack Lightfoot was hustled from the house, still blindfolded, and was hurried away through the darkness, in the direction of the railroad.

"We aren't going to hurt you this time," said Kennedy, after they had gone some distance; "we're just going to give you a good scare."

This was so different from what Jack expected that it struck him as strange. He was sure all along that what they were trying to do was to give him merely a good scare. It seemed remarkable, therefore, that Kennedy should admit it. You cannot easily scare any one by telling him in advance that it is all you intend to do.

"We're going to tie you to the railroad track," Ken-

nedy continued. "The express is almost due. But we'll untie you before it comes. It will make you feel funny to hear it coming while you're tied to the rails, but we'll untie you before it strikes you."

Jack did not answer. He was thinking the thing over, and asking himself why Kennedy was telling him that.

When the railroad track was reached, beyond the borders of the town, the hazers rushed Jack upon the track. They had removed the blindfold from his eyes, but his hands were still tied behind his back.

One of the hazers had some twisted paper, to which he now touched a lighted match; and the quick flame of the torch revealed to Jack the embankment and the glistening rails, as well as the grotesque forms that surrounded him.

"Tie him to the rails, fellows," said the leader; "the train will be here in a minute!"

Jack had been obedient up to this point, believing they would not dare to do anything that might put him in real peril. He knew that his arm had not been burned, and yet the thought of permitting himself to be bound to those rails was not pleasant.

"Fellows, I protest against this!" he said, leaning back. "This is going a bit too far. A little nonsense is all right, but this——"

They clutched him by the arms and shoulders and pushed him on. He fought as well as he could; and when one of them got in front of him he lifted him with a quick kick in the stomach that made him cry out in pain and double over. It did him good to know that the fellow he kicked was Kid Kennedy.

But it threw Kennedy into renewed rage.

"Pound his head off, if he resists!" said that individual now. "Tie him to the rails! Down with him!"

Jack struggled, but they overpowered him and dragged him down; and with the rope which one of them carried Lightfoot was tied to the track in such a manner that he could not readily escape.

One of the hazers looked at his watch by the light of the torch.

"She'll be here in less than two minutes!" he said hurriedly.

Then the torch was extinguished, and Jack heard the hazers running away.

He squirmed in his bonds; then lay back, panting, trying to size up the situation.

He could not believe that they intended to leave him there to be struck by the engine. Yet what had they

meant by that singular statement, that after giving him a good scare they would release him in time?

The only answer to that which Jack could think of was an unpleasant suggestion that they really meant to let the engine strike him; and then, if their murderous work was afterward brought home to them, to claim that they had intended to release him in time and were prevented for some reason or other.

That suggestion was sufficient to shake even the iron nerves of Jack Lightfoot. He felt sure that Kid Kennedy hated him badly enough to wish his death; but that any of the other hazers did was more difficult to believe.

Jack began to wonder if it was possible for Kid to so plan things that the hazers would not be able to get back in time to release him from his perilous position.

The railroad at that point was not familiar to Jack, for he was a stranger in the country; but by the light of the paper torch he had seen that it ran through a cut just beyond, and he was sure that the cut would keep the engineer and fireman from observing him until the train was too close upon him to be stopped.

Altogether, this situation was an unpleasant one, and provocative of misgivings, and even of fear.

His belief in the treacherous characteristics of Kid Kennedy, and his growing fear that all was not as it should be, caused him to begin a serious struggle to release himself.

He was stretched on his back across the track, with his arms bound on each side of him to the rail, and his legs and feet tied to the other rail. One turn of the rope crossed his chest.

Though he could turn his head he could not reach any of the cords with his teeth, nor could he lift his hands and arms.

His struggle was ineffective, and it seemed he was utterly helpless.

He began to feel that he had been an unmitigated fool for not fighting the hazers from the very beginning. That the chances were all against him from the first, he knew; yet he could have fought them until overpowered; and then, if brought to this position, he would have had at least the poor satisfaction of knowing that he had resisted all he could.

He had been too obedient, he thought—too "easy." Lafe had taken their efforts with a jocularly that had half disarmed them. Lafe seemed able to do that, and successfully; he, Jack Lightfoot, could not. He had not been complaisant enough to cause them to treat him leniently, and he had not fought them enough to make his resistance worth while.

If he could have had some recollection of bloody heads and broken noses which he had given them he would have felt better now. He had kicked Kid Kennedy in the stomach and doubled him up for a few moments, but that was about all. And here he was—tied to the rails, and deserted.

He was sure that he was far from any house, or highway, and that, together with the thought that perhaps the hazers were somewhere near, watching him, and waiting for him to begin to call lustily for help, kept his mouth closed.

At intervals he struggled vainly at the cords, but only succeeded in cutting his arms and weakening himself.

Then he heard the distant roar of a coming train and the sharp, biting blast of a whistle.

He struggled again when he heard that, only to drop back, half-exhausted. Though the rails and the ground were cold, and his position was cramped, he had suddenly broken into a hot perspiration.

The roar of the approaching train increased.

"It's the express," was his thought, as he listened to it.

Once more that sharp whistle cut the air, as the train neared a crossing.

Jack was still expecting that the hazers would return and release him. It seemed impossible that they could do otherwise. Yet they did not come, nor could he hear them moving about or whispering, and, when he turned his head as far as he could, he could see nothing of them.

The fascination of the dark cut through which he expected to behold the flash of the headlight, and see the engine jump out at him like some terrible monster, drew his gaze most of the time. He could hardly take his eyes from it.

And still no one came to his relief, while the roar of the train grew louder and louder.

Jack began to be really afraid now. He was not one of those marvelous boys whose intuitions tell them in advance just what is going to take place. He did not know what was going to happen, and he began to fear the worst.

He could not forget the singular fact that Kid Kennedy had told him the hazers would return in time to release him. If they had meant to scare him by making him think they did not intend to release him, why should they tell him that? He could not make that out.

Still the roar of the train drew nearer, and no one came to his assistance.

The sudden belief that he had been abandoned, and that Kid Kennedy had contrived treacherously for it, threw Jack into a chill of terror.

He began to struggle again to throw off his bonds. He had writhed furiously before, but now his efforts were tenfold more desperate. When fully aroused, Jack Lightfoot had almost the strength of Lafe Lampton, and far from than Lafe's agility. He writhed in his bonds, and threw himself to and fro with inconceivable energy.

And then—

He felt the cords slip on his right wrist—that powerful right wrist and arm, toughened by baseball pitching and much work in the gym and elsewhere.

The cord slipped; and Jack tugged and strained again. The loop round his wrist eased, and, by frenzied efforts, he drew his hand through it.

With fierce haste he attacked now the cord that held his other wrist; and, though working with such hurried energy, his fingers were never surer.

He freed his hands, and then untied the rope that lay across his chest.

The roar of the approaching train was frightful. It seemed to be near, and ready to dash upon him through that black cut. The whistle of the engine screamed right at hand, and the glare of the headlight brightened the sky.

As Jack thus struggled with the cords that held him, while his feet were still bound to the other rail of the track, and the roar of the train thundered in his ears, there came another sound—the hurried running of feet.

"They're coming back to release me," was his thought; "and they're too late!"

Then he began furiously on the cords that held his feet, with the flash of the headlight shining above him, and the scream of the whistle mingling again with the thunder of the train.

CHAPTER X.

WITH LAFE LAMPTON.

In order to tell clearly what further happened, it seems advisable to return for a few minutes to Lafe Lampton, whose escape from the tumble-down house has been chronicled.

Lafe had been warned that an attempt would be made that night to haze both Jack and himself.

The warning came after his return from the basketball game, and was given by Lee Willis, who stopped him out beyond the academy gates, in the darkness.

"Is Lightfoot with you?" said Willis, glancing about. "I heard you talking over there, and so knew you."

Lafe was not well acquainted with Willis, and he was inclined to suspect some unworthy motive in this approach.

"Jack hasn't got back yet, I believe," he answered cautiously.

"I'd like to see you both," Willis went on, sinking his voice so that it could not be heard far away. "I'm a new man here, like you, and I've learned that there's to be an attempt to haze you and Lightfoot to-night. I've been waiting here to give you warning."

Lafe's interest was quickened.

"What do you know?" he asked.

"Would you mind going up into my room, so that we can talk it over there without being disturbed?"

"I don't go into any rooms until I know about them first," said Lafe bluntly. "Jack got into trouble in that way, and I keep out of rooms."

Willis laughed.

"Well, then, we'll walk along here," he said. "It's dark down by this fence; and we'll be safe from observation, I guess."

"You say you're a new man here," said Lafe.

"Yes. My name is Willis—Lee Willis. I'm from the South, and I haven't been here long. They've put me through the mill, to some extent; and, when I

found they were planning to lay for you to-night, I wanted to warn you."

"If you're straight," said Lafe, "and your voice sounds like it, here's my hand!"

Lee Willis caught it, and pressed it warmly.

They turned to walk together along the fence.

"There are several of us fellows here—new men—and the older students have made it pretty warm for us. There's only one way for us to do, and that's to stand together all we can. They're a set of cowards. I've sent two challenges for duels, but they haven't the nerve for anything like that."

Lafe whistled.

"Duels! Jiminy crickets!"

"Swords, or pistols—anything—I would have fought them with anything; but they're cowards!"

"Say, you're a fire-eater! Duels!"

"That strikes you as funny?"

"Well, it does!"

"They wouldn't meet me, but laid for me treacherously, and tried to make me miserable and cover me with confusion."

"Tried to play horse with you!"

"Just so; and the thing was hard to stand."

"But about this to-night?" said Lafe.

"I don't know just what they're up to, but I chanced to overhear Sid Percival and Kid Kennedy talking, and I heard enough to know that they've got it in for you two fellows to-night. I thought I'd give you the tip."

They turned to walk back.

"You're all right, Willis," said Lafe. "Jack will be glad to have you for a friend, I know. And when you come to know him, you'll be willing to say that he's the whitest chap on the planet. He's a corker. But these Yahoos don't know it, and won't, until he teaches them a lesson or two. I'm obliged to you, I'm sure; and he will be, too."

Lafe had noticed Lee Willis, but had not before spoken to him. Lafe was a pretty good judge of character, and Willis impressed him as being "straight goods." He was ready to laugh at the idea of Willis challenging his persecutors to a series of duels; but while amused at that idea, which seemed excessively

funny to him, he could, at the same time, appreciate the kindly intentions that had provoked this warning.

Lafe and Lee Willis stood out beyond the gates for some time, observing from the darkness the students who returned from the basket-ball game.

But they did not see Jack.

In fact, Lafe missed seeing Jack, and finally went up to his own room, and tumbled straightway into the trap which had been laid for him there; for some of the hazers were under the bed, and, as Lafe stepped up to it, they laid hold of his legs, and brought him to the floor; and then they set on him, and reduced him to subjection.

After that, they took him to the tumble-down house where Jack found him, and where, as the reader has seen, Lafe managed to wriggle out of his bonds and get away.

In an inner pocket, Lafe had a small knife, and when he plunged out of the doorway, he had secured that, and cut the cords away from his ankles; and then fled with such astonishing speed that, aided by the darkness, he had baffled pursuit.

Lafe had not run very far, however, when he heard his name called in a low tone.

He had doubled on his track, like a fox, and at the time was between the tumble-down house and the academy buildings. Feeling that his own safety was now assured, he was on the point of creeping back, and trying for the release of Jack.

He stopped when he heard that voice, but did not answer.

"Is that you, Lampton?" came again.

"Me, or my ghost!" said Lafe, in a low tone. "Who are you?"

Then a form lifted itself into view, and Lafe saw before him Lee Willis, the Southerner.

"I heard you coming," said Willis, "and when I got a look, I thought I knew you. Jack has been captured."

"You bet I know it!" was Lafe's answer. "I've just got away from the same gang myself. They're right off there, in a little house. I made a break, and got away, but they've got Jack yet. How did you know they had him?"

Lee Willis turned about, and whistled softly.

Several fellows rose out of the darkness, to Lafe's astonishment.

"Got a whole regiment with you, eh? Jiminy Christmas!"

"These are the new men I was telling you about," Willis whispered. "Come forward, fellows; it's all right. This is Lampton."

They came forward quietly, and Willis introduced them in low words.

"You see, it was this way," Willis began; but Lafe cut him short.

"But, jiminy crickets, they've got Jack! And we ought to get him away from them."

"Just so," said Willis. "And we're ready to go with you. But we must have some plan. As I was saying, one of these men saw the hazers bring Jack down the ladder from his room. We've been watching round. And he came straight to me with the news. We hurried to your room, but you weren't there."

"They'd captured me, too!" said Lafe, with a sense of grim humor.

"You were gone; and, as they had been seen to go in this direction, we came this way, too."

"Well, now, follow me," said Lafe, "and I can lead you to where we'll have some fun, and likely some fighting. Willis, here's your chance for a duel—with fists! I hope you hammer the tar out of Kid Kennedy. You've my permission to do it."

But when they reached the tumble-down house, Jack Lightfoot and his captors were gone from it, and Jack was being hurried toward the railroad.

CHAPTER XI.

TURNING THE TABLES.

And now we go back to Jack Lightfoot, at the moment he threw himself from the railroad track and heard the thunder of the train and the scream of the whistle of the engine.

The sensation which came to him immediately after doing that was the queerest he had ever experienced; for he discovered in that same instant that the train

whose approach had so shaken his nerves was not on the track from which he had released himself, but on another, which ran close by, and almost parallel with it.

Until then he had not known that there were two tracks. He saw now, however, that the hazers had known it, and that they had used this knowledge, as well as their knowledge that a train would come thundering over that second track at that time, to give him a terrible fright. The thing was clever. Jack was willing to admit that, as he lay sprawled at the foot of the embankment, where he had tumbled. His nerves were still shaking, but he was rejoicing that he had escaped, even though he still would have been safe enough on the track.

Then a correct perception of how fiendish the thing was, after all, swept over him. Jack's nerves were strong, and his courage unsurpassed; yet he had been filled with horror, and had struggled wildly, and, as it chanced, successfully, to release himself.

Some other boy, with nerves not so strong, and a heart not so courageous, might have been thrown into such a convulsion of fear that his mind would have been forever wrecked; or he might have injured himself even fatally in his frantic efforts to free himself.

"A cowards' trick!" thought Jack.

These thoughts had gone through his mind like lightning, for he had not yet lifted himself from his recumbent position, and the heavy train was still roaring by, but a few yards away, when he heard a low whistle, followed instantly by the equally low Cranford call of "Coo-ee!"

Jack's heart leaped.

He knew that call had come from Lafe; and he answered it, lifting his voice so that it could be heard in the roar of the train.

Then Lafe came slipping toward him along the embankment. It was a sight to warm Jack's heart.

"Are you all right, old pal?" Lafe asked anxiously, as he came up, laying his hand affectionately on Jack's shoulder.

Jack was about to rise, but Lafe's hand held him down.

"Go slow!"

"I'm all right," said Jack.

"Good! Jiminy crickets, but I was afraid you wasn't, just a minute ago. When we saw you go off the track that way, we thought you was going to run into that train, instead of away from it."

"We?"

"Myself and some others. Oh, say, we've got those Smart Alecks on the run! We scared 'em just now, and they cut out."

Jack sat up.

"You don't understand, I see. Your head's all right, is it? You ain't hurt any?"

"I'm all right, I think."

"You think?"

"Well, my arms and wrists and legs ache like the dickens. My wrists feel as if they had been sawed off. Those cords cut, I tell you! But I don't understand."

He sat up. The train was still roaring along, the red lights at the rear flashing.

"It's this way," Lafe explained hurriedly. "I haven't much time to talk, but I'll tell you this. Lee Willis—maybe you know him—gave me a tip that there was to be some fool hazing attempted to-night. He's one of the new men; and he and some of them are right over there now, waiting for me. I got away from that house, you know, and then I fell in with them. Well, I led 'em back to that shanty, but you were gone. We followed. We saw the fellows tie you to the track, but were too far off to do anything. They had a light, you know; but after the light went out, we couldn't see either them or you. But we knew about where you were, so we made a crawl along the track. We heard that train coming, and, at first, we were pretty well worked up, I tell you. Then Willis remembered that there was another track, and we discovered that the train was coming on that.

"So we changed our plan, and——"

He stopped, and listened.

"There they are now! Hear that?"

"This way, professor! They were over here awhile ago!"

The words reached Jack plainly, and he heard the sounds of moving feet a short distance away.

"Do you catch on?" said Lafe. "That's Willis and his crowd. They're making Kid Kennedy's gang believe that some one has led Professor Chubb over here. You bet it will freeze their feet if they think Chubb is after them. And now for the plan."

Jack had risen to his knees.

Lafe produced something round and dark, which he drew up from behind him.

"Just some old willow brush," he explained. "Slide out of your coat quick, and we'll rig this as a dummy, see?"

Jack saw instantly, though he did not yet thoroughly understand.

His coat and his hat came off.

"There'll be another train along here in just about a minute or two, Willis says, and it will be on this track—the track to which you were tied," Lafe went on, as he and Jack worked hastily to turn the willow brush into the semblance of a human being. "Kennedy's gang intended to give you a great scare with that first train—just scare the life out of you!—and then they meant to untie you before the other train came along on this track. We'll go 'em one better."

Jack understood thoroughly now.

"Great!" he whispered, as he worked away. "We'll turn the tables on 'em!"

"We'll trick the tricksters!" said Lafe, bubbling with enthusiasm.

"Did you plan this?"

"Yep; as soon as Willis told me about the two trains. This second train is only a few minutes behind the other. We'll tie this dummy to the track, and then we'll see what those fellows do. Willis has got 'em good and scared by this time. I heard 'em running."

As quickly as they could, they put the coat and hat on the dummy, and then dragged it to the track, and there in the darkness placed it in the position Jack had occupied.

Fortunately for Jack, he had a warm sweater under his coat, which, by a good chance, was of dark color and did not betray him, as a white or light-colored one might have done.

"I think they're over this way, professor."

It was Lee Willis again, leading his imaginary Professor Chubb in search of Kid Kennedy and his chums.

Following the words, Jack and Lafe heard Willis and some of his friends tramping about, not far from the track.

"There has been some mischief done here, professor! I don't know what it is, but they were over here somewhere, and they had one of the new fellows as a prisoner. They were up to some hazing trick, I'm sure."

The imaginary professor grumbled something in a thick voice that, at a little distance, might be supposed to resemble Chubb's.

Jack and Lafe slid from the track where they had done their work, and, having reached the lower level, crawled on in the direction of Willis and his friends.

As they did so, they heard the whistle of a locomotive.

The other train was coming.

CHAPTER XII.

TRICKING THE TRICKSTERS.

Kid Kennedy's rage against Jack might have led him farther than it did, if it had not been for the restraining influence of Sid Percival and Julian Glaze.

Sid Percival could not fail to remember that Jack had saved the life of his sister; and, while that would not cause him, as an upper classman, to turn against the fellows of his own class, and favor a new student, it did cause him to oppose some of Kid's more dangerous and malignant plans.

It was Sid himself, backed by Julian Glaze, who had favored the plan at last adopted—the plan of tying Jack Lightfoot to the railroad track, and giving him a great scare. Knowledge of the two tracks and the two express-trains that passed over them at so nearly the same time suggested the idea.

Sid Percival was as much bent on holding the new students down to what the upper classmen considered their proper place as was even Kid Kennedy.

Sid had assisted in annoying and in attempting to

haze the Southerner, Lee Willis, and some of the others who afterward came to the aid of Lafe and Jack.

Kid Kennedy's "gang" had pretty well subdued all the newcomers. Willis had raved, and had sent challenges to duels, which Kennedy and his crowd had ignored and laughed at. They told Willis, as they later told Jack, that he was but an angle-worm, that he had no real right to live and breathe in the presence of an upper classman, and that when he addressed one of them, he must be sure always to say, "Yes, sir," and "No, sir," emphasizing the "sir."

Willis had not yet been forced into entire obedience, which was perhaps the reason why he was so ready to come to Jack's assistance; but all the other new students had been whipped and hazed and terrified into submission.

When Jack Lightfoot appeared on the scene, the course pursued toward Willis and the others had been begun against him at once. And because Jack had not submitted meekly to whatever indignities the upper classmen chose to put on him, but was ready to stand up and fight for his rights and for decent treatment, he had been singled out as a victim for the worst that the upper classmen could do.

While Jack was writhing and tugging to break his bonds, and the frightful roar of that first train was sounding in his ears, Kennedy and his gang were crouching in the darkness, some distance away, and in fancy depicting to themselves what he was doing and suffering.

Of course they meant to remove him from the track before the second train was due.

But just here their plans were interfered with. Willis came upon the scene with the fellows who were with him; and he appeared to be talking to Professor Chubb.

The darkness, now that the light of the paper torch was gone, had been too great for Kennedy and his crowd to see who was really with Willis; but they recognized his voice, and they fancied that in the answers which were now and then given they detected the tones of Professor Chubb.

From what they heard, it seemed quite plain that

Lee Willis and some of the other new men had "tumbled" to the game that was being played against Jack Lightfoot, and had led Professor Chubb to that place.

Not doubting that the fat professor, whom they feared, was with Willis, the only thing left for them to do was to withdraw quietly, until after Chubb and Willis were gone; and they hoped, as they made this withdrawal, that Jack would not be released until after he had been scared blue by that first train.

The train roared by as they were "craw-fishing" from their place of hiding; and, when it had gone, they again heard Willis, as he poked about with "Professor Chubb."

They could hear Willis plainly, and, from what he was saying, it was clear that he and Chubb, and the others, had not yet found Jack. That led the gang under Kennedy to think that perhaps the fright given by that train had caused Jack to faint, and that he was now lying speechless and senseless.

Then they heard the approach of the second train; and they fell into a sweat of fear themselves.

"Professor Chubb" and Willis, and those others, were between them and the place where Jack was thought to be tied; and they could not now get to Jack to relieve him; and they were sure that if they did not release him that train would run over him—and that might be called murder.

They were almost on the point of trying to go to Jack by a roundabout "sneak," when Willis and "Professor Chubb" walked straight in their direction.

Willis was trying to frighten them away from the track, and he now succeeded. They believed that if Chubb saw them, and recognized any one of them, that individual would be expelled from the academy.

Still hoping for time to go to Jack Lightfoot's release, they retreated in the darkness before Willis and those who were with him; and, as they fled, they heard Willis say:

"It's strange, professor; but I thought they were right here somewhere. Ah! didn't you hear something then? I believe the rascals are right out there now!"

The boy who was acting the part of "Professor

Chubb" spoke in heavier tones, but they were lower, and Kennedy's crowd could not understand what he said; but they knew that he and Willis, and the others, came in that direction.

So they scampered, running softly back into the darkness.

Willis and "Professor Chubb," having driven the hazers back, turned around now, and walked in the direction of the track.

"They'll find him!" said Kid Kennedy, in a whisper.

"But maybe they won't!" urged Sid Percival. "If they don't?"

"We can't go up there now, anyway, and get ourselves caught. They're close to that place where Jack is tied."

"He doesn't seem to be able to speak!" said another.

"No, that scare keeled him over, I guess!"

It was Sid who said the last, and his tone was anxious.

"Fellows," he went on, "I think we ought to shout out, and tell Chubb and Willis and that crowd that Jack is right there close by them, tied to the track. That train is coming mighty fast!"

"Oh, they'll see him!" urged Kennedy.

"They haven't seen him yet, and they don't know he's there."

Sid Percival had no desire to bring about Jack's death. He thought they had scared Jack until he was senseless, and, now that Jack's life was, seemingly, in peril, and they were responsible for his position, he wanted to shout to Willis and the supposed professor, and inform them of Jack's danger.

"Just wait a minute!" Kid urged nervously. "They're sure to find him; they can't miss him."

Then all stood together in the darkness, listening to the increasing roar of the fast express.

It sounded as if it were just beyond the cut now, and its headlight brightened the sky. Then its whistle smote the air.

"If you fellows won't yell, I will!" said Sid desperately; and he put his hands to his lips, and shouted out wildly a warning to Willis and the "professor."

Then the light of the approaching engine shone through the cut, and, as it did so, they saw that Willis

and his crowd were beyond the point where Jack had been tied to the track, and were walking on, away from him. They did not take time to study the fellows who were with Willis, or they might have observed that among them there was not one who was as wide and as fat as Professor Chubb; the thing that drew their eyes was that form on the track.

They beheld the dummy plainly, as the light of the locomotive struck it.

And then, following Sid, they began to run in that direction, thinking that Willis and his crowd had not heard, or understood, and believing that Jack's life was in peril.

The dummy on the track did not stir, of course, as they ran toward it, their hearts beating with sudden fear.

Then the engineer caught sight of the object on the track, and the whistle of the locomotive screamed.

Sid Percival and those who followed him were still running, yet they knew they would be too late.

Then, before they could reach the dummy, the pilot of the engine struck it, and hurled it from the track.

Sid dropped to his knees, gasping. His face was white as a sheet. The others stopped, horror-stricken. Before their eyes, as they believed, they had seen Jack Lightfoot hurled to his death from the track; and they had been the cause of it!

They stood gasping in fright, looking at each other, with faces blanched, as the train rolled by, its brakes squealing. The engineer had applied the air brakes, but he could not instantly bring the heavy train to a stop. He, too, believed that the engine had knocked a human form from the rails.

The whole length of the train passed before the grinding brakes brought it to a halt; and then Kid Kennedy and those with him dashed across the track to where the dummy had been hurled, expecting to find there the mangled remains of Jack Lightfoot.

The thought of what they had done horrified them now. What the result would be they dared not think. But they knew it would mean expulsion, arrest, perhaps the penitentiary, or even a series of hangings.

Small wonder that they were a badly scared and shaken group.

They reached the dummy just as some of the trainmen dropped from the rear of the last coach, and came running toward them. One of the trainmen carried a lighted lantern. Heads were being thrust from car windows, and those heads were asking a multitude of questions which no one troubled to answer.

Kid Kennedy and Sid Percival looked down at Jack's coat and hat.

"Good heavens!" cried Sid, staggered by what he beheld. "His legs are gone! He's been cut in two!"

The darkness was too great for accurate inspection, but they fancied they had discovered that awful fact, at least.

Sid dropped down by the coat and hat, which were still attached to the dummy of willow brush; and then he reeled with bewilderment.

Kid Kennedy was down at his side, and some of the other fellows.

"I—I——" stammered Kid.

"He's dead?" was asked. "What is it?"

All were gasping with horror.

"Why, it's—it's——"

"What?"

"I don't know," said Sid, bewildered. "Here is his coat and hat, but——"

"His legs were cut off, Kid said!" cried one.

"But—but the—the upper part of him, and his head—they're gone, too! And——"

Kid was inspecting more closely, with his fingers.

Then he discovered the trick. His brain whirled in a way to make him seasick, with the revulsion of feeling; and he gasped, in dismay:

"Say, fellows! There's a trick here! This is—is—a dummy!"

The trainmen had arrived with their lantern, and more men were dropping from the train and running back along the track. With the arrival of the trainmen, another group had come—the group that followed Lee Willis. In that group now were Jack Lightfoot and Lafe Lampton, as well as the young fellow who had so successfully played the part of "Professor Chubb."

"What is it—a man?" asked the trainman, swinging his lantern forward.

Kid Kennedy scrambled to his feet, red-faced and confused, with his heart thumping strangely and a queer, choking feeling in his throat. He was also beginning to feel enraged. He knew now that he had been tricked; and Sid knew it; and, likewise, most of the others of Kid's crowd.

"Why, what is this?" said the trainman, kicking at the willow dummy.

He glared at Kid and those about him.

"Is this some fool joke?" he demanded.

Kid Kennedy did not answer. He was looking with wild eyes and open mouth at Jack Lightfoot, whose features were revealed now by the light of the lantern; and he was looking at Lafe Lampton and those others. There stood Jack, in his sweater. And here were his coat and hat, which had been used on the dummy. Kid Kennedy had never felt so small and weak in all his life.

Then he felt even smaller and weaker—felt as if he wished he could find some little hole somewhere, and crawl into it and hide for the rest of his life—when Lafe and Jack swung their hands, and yelled with laughter, and all the fellows with them groaned in a maddening way:

"Sold!—sold!—sold!"

Kid Kennedy and Sid Percival, and their chums, did not know how it had happened—how it had been done—even now; but they saw enough, and knew enough, and heard enough, to know that truly they had been "sold."

And they had not a word to say.

They felt as if they would sink into the ground.

They had not dreamed of such a thing, and never had any set of fellows been "sold" more completely.

THE END.

Next week's issue will be No. 54, "Jack Lightfoot's First Victory; or, A Battle for Blood." Some new characters, and some more of the old ones, appear in this story; and Jack and his friends, also, demonstrate, to the disgust and astonishment of some of the fellows of Seagirt, that they understand sports pretty well, and particularly the capital sport of ice hockey. You will find it a lively yarn.

HOW TO DO THINGS

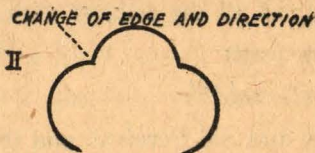
By AN OLD ATHLETE.

Timely essays and hints upon various athletic sports and pastimes in which our boys are usually deeply interested, and told in a way that may be easily understood. Instructive articles may be found in back numbers of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, as follows: No. 31, "How to Make a Cheap Skiff." No. 32, "Archery." No. 33, "Cross-Country Running." No. 34, "The Game of Lacrosse." No. 35, "The Boy With a Hobby for Collecting." No. 36, "Football, and How to Play It." No. 37, "A Practice Game." No. 38, "How to Play Football—Training." No. 39, "The Men in the Line." No. 40, "The Men Behind." No. 41, "Signal Systems." No. 42, "Team Play." No. 43, "The End of the Season." No. 44, "A Gymnasium Without Apparatus." (I.) No. 45, "A Gymnasium Without Apparatus." (II.) No. 46, "Bag-Punching." No. 47, "Camping." No. 48, "Cruising in Small Boats." No. 49, "Snow-Shoe and Skee Work." No. 50, "How to Make and Use a Toboggan." No. 51, "Tip-Ups for Pickerel Fishing Through the Ice." No. 52, Winter Sports.

FANCY SKATING.

Every boy likes to skate. The boy is not alone in this, for the grown-ups take just as much interest in skating as he does. This ever popular sport begins with the first big freeze, everybody seeming to try to be the first one on the ice. The season is so short at best that the enthusiastic skater wants to make good use of his time and not miss a day while it lasts.

In a big city like New York the facilities for skating



are much better than in small towns. The park authorities keep a watchful eye over the lakes where the city's millions do their skating and make every provision for the people's safety. No one is allowed to go on the ice until it freezes to a certain thickness, and when everything is in proper form a signal is flung to the breeze from a flagstaff to notify the public that the skating-season is on at last. If there has been a heavy snow, the city boy, unlike his country cousin, is not obliged to put in several hours with a shovel and broom to clear the ice before he can use his skates, for the park attendants have been out with a huge sweeper, drawn by horses, long before he has jumped from under the warm bedclothes, and polished the ice for the day's skating till it looks like glass.

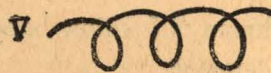
A portable house is erected on the bank, where the tired



skaters may go and rest before a comfortable stove when the icy blast blows too hard.

The use of skates is so old that their origin is buried in the dim obscurity of the past. The Norse, Swedes, and Dutch probably were the first to make use of skates. It is known, on the authority of an ancient writer, that

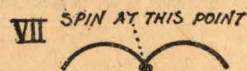
the English learned to skate from the Hollanders in the twelfth century. The skates used in those days were very primitive affairs, consisting of runners made from the breast-bone of an ox. It was impossible to take long strides with such a peculiar arrangement, and the skater propelled himself over the smooth surface by the aid of an iron-pointed stick thrust into the ice. In the fourteenth century, wooden skates, shod with steel, began to take the place of the other kind. One of the greatest battles of history was fought on the old-fashioned wooden skates when the Dutch, in 1572, sallied from their ships frozen in the ice at Amsterdam and repulsed a body of Spaniards sent to capture the vessels.



It was some time after this before skating developed into a sport and any attempts were made to keep speed records. But figure skating, which we are going to talk to you about this week, is of comparative recent date. You may be a pretty swift skater, and able to outdistance all your companions, but if you can do a few "stunts" in the way of fancy skating it will add considerably to your laurels. To become an adept at this sort of work you will need to have the patience to do a great deal of practising and bear up under some disappointments. But, after mastering the first simple strokes, the rest will not seem so hard to learn.

Watch fancy skaters when you have a chance and observe their methods; at the same time, study the diagrams given in this article until they are fixed in your mind so that you are familiar with every stroke, and know just how it ought to be done.

An important thing for the beginner to remember is



the position and carriage of the body. In making a stroke, the whole body should be thrown to either side. Most people make the mistake of swinging the legs out in front of them. This prevents the skater from keeping a perfectly even balance when the other foot is lifted from the ice and the weight thrown on the edge of the skate. The leg on the ice you should hold perfectly straight, but not stiff. The leg which is off the ice should also be held straight, but be careful not to have it rigid. The toe should point downward, the heel being about twelve inches behind the other foot.

The "curve" and the "spin" are the main features of figure skating. The curve is a stroke by which a person

(Continued on page 30.)

A CHAT WITH YOU

Under this general head we purpose each week to sit around the camp-fire, and have a heart-to-heart talk with those of our young readers who care to gather there, answering such letters as may reach us asking for information with regard to various healthy sports, both indoor and out. We should also be glad to hear what you think of the leading characters in your favorite publication. It is the editor's desire to make this department one that will be eagerly read from week to week by every admirer of the Jack Lightfoot stories, and prove to be of valuable assistance in building up manly, healthy Sons of America. All letters received will be answered immediately, but may not appear in print under five weeks, owing to the fact that the publication must go to press far in advance of the date of issue. Those who favor us with correspondence will please bear this in mind, and exercise a little patience.

THE EDITOR.

I have read your weekly from No. 11 to date, and think it second only to *Tip Top Weekly*, which means a great deal. All the characters are fine, especially Jack and Lafe. The author's stand against ju-jitsu, that tricky Japanese art of scrapping, is, as I think, right, and no true American should bother with it, as it was not made for Americans.

The girls in Mr. Stevens' stories are true to life, and show the great difference between our future women. Books where the hero is never defeated are not in comparison with the Lightfoot stories, as Jack is subject to defeat in some things. Taken in all, the ALL-SPORTS is an American publication to be proud of. In closing, I will say that I am collecting souvenir postal cards, and will honestly exchange with any person in any county, State, or country. Expecting to hear from many readers, I will close, wishing ALL-SPORTS a long and prosperous life and the same to Mr. Stevens,

T. HOUSTON.

5816 Alder Street, Pittsburg, Pa.

ALL-SPORTS is a weekly that you make no mistake in praising. It's too bad that you did not have a chance to read the issues appearing before No. 11, so that you could have followed Jack's adventures from the start.

I have read the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY from 1 to 43, and I have yet to find one that I did not thoroughly enjoy. I like Jack, Tom, Phil, Lafe, Brodie, and Jubal best. I would like to see Delancy Shelton and Jack be friends, and see him spend some of his money on Jack. I was glad to see Jack and Reel make up. I think the ALL-SPORTS is getting better right along. I stay up Saturday nights until I read the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. I take the liberty of asking you some questions. I am 19 years 3 months old. My weight is 147 pounds; height, 5 feet 4 inches; neck, 14 1/4 inches; chest, expanded, 41 inches; bicep, right, 11 inches; expanded, 13 inches; left, 10 1/2 inches; expanded, 12 1/2 inches; waist, 32 1/2 inches; wrist, right, 7 1/4 inches; left, 7 1/4 inches; around shoulders, 45 inches; thigh, right, 24 inches; left, 23 1/2 inches; calf, right, 14 inches; expanded, 15 1/2 inches; left, 13 1/2 inches; expanded, 15 inches; ankle, right, 9 inches; left, 8 3/4 inches. What are my strong points? What are my weak points? Yours truly,

JACK'S FRIEND.

Aberdeen, S. D.

You are a very well-built young man. We can find nothing the matter with you except overweight. Providing this does not run to fat, but is good solid muscle, you need not worry about weak points.

Allow three little messenger boys who have read your most fascinating weekly, the ALL-SPORTS, to say a word. We think it is the best on the market. The girls are our favorite characters, for we three fellows like the girls, and we almost fight every day over the smiles of some fair damsel; therefore we think Kate Strawn, Nellie Connor, and Daisy Lightfoot are the finest girls of which we have ever read. Before reading your excellent "weekly" we were all habitual users of the young-life destroyers called cigarettes, also confirmed pool-players. But, thanks to Mr. Stevens, our vices are at an end, and from puny,

sickly boys, we are fast gaining the elixir of life through constant training as prescribed in your weekly. Now as to the characters, we like Jack first of all, and think he would make a good member of our messenger boys A. A., as our captain, Mr. Frank McDonna, head messenger at the Western Union Telegraph Company, often says. As for Reel Snodgrass, if he ever comes to Huntington we will set Monk Bright, the messenger boys' "scrapper," after him if he ever dares to show his Bombay face in our village. Your baseball and football stories are excellent, and although you have a worthy opponent in *Tip Top*, it is not one bit better than your ALL-SPORTS. We are glad to see Jack is about to have adventures in other places besides Cranford, and hope his triumphs will never cease. Jube Marlin, little Nat Skeen, and the others are all right. But Wilson Crane and the gang, with Snodgrass and his puppy partner, Livingston, are no good. Will now bring this to a close, hoping it will not reach the waste-basket, for we all admire your weekly and always speak a good word for your little paper when we can. Hurrah for ALL-SPORTS forever! Will close, from your three little messenger friends,

WILLIE MILLS,
FORBES HOLTON,
COOCHEE BRIGHT,

Postal Messengers at the Florentine Hotel.

Huntington, W. Va.

Here are three gallant boys who admire the girls in the stories, and why shouldn't you? It is a treat to make the acquaintance of such charming young ladies. We are glad to know that ALL-SPORTS has had such a good influence that you have given up your bad habits. You will never regret having done so, and in after years will look back at the time you read ALL-SPORTS and thank the day you first became interested in it.

A short time ago I wrote a letter to ALL-SPORTS, but never saw it in print, so I thought I would write again. ALL-SPORTS is certainly a fine book, and one of the leaders in boys' literature.

I like Jack, Tom, Lafe, Phil, Ned, but I hate Crane. He is altogether too long-legged, and when he went against Jack he showed his true nature—he wants to lead in everything.

Phil I like. He is gritty and full of snap and ginger, and one of the best athletes in Cranford.

I would like to see that dude Shelton and Reel Snodgrass both of them kicked out of Cranford. Reel showed what a sneak and liar he was when he lied to Jack about his—Jack's—father. I hope Cranford will never cease to win the pennant for both baseball and football.

Mr. Stevens certainly gave us some fine stories on both baseball and football. Are Jack and his chums going to play basketball this winter? I hope they do. I would be very much pleased to exchange souvenir cards or correspond with any of the readers of ALL-SPORTS. With three cheers for Mr. Stevens, I remain,
328 Warren Avenue, Chicago, Ill. WALTER G. WHITEHEAD.

This is a pleasant letter from an admiring reader. Evidently you have been a close student of the affairs at Cranford and know each character intimately. Perhaps Mr. Stevens will conclude to give us a taste of basket-ball before spring rolls around.

Now that evening is here, work is over, and I am home resting from a hard day's go in the mills, I take my pen in hand to write and tell ALL-SPORTS readers what I think of the greatest weekly ever published, either in this country or in any other. I am an Englishman by birth, and lived on the other side for some time before coming to this country. I used to read all the boys' papers printed over there, and can say that I have probably read all that appeared while I was there. But when I came to America and could not get those that I had been used to, I took to reading what I could get on the news-stands. At first I did not know whether I would get used to them, but the more I read them the more I got to like them. A friend of mine gave me a copy of your publication, and I have been reading it

ever since. This weekly and *Tip Top* are my favorites. I hope your other readers get as much enjoyment out of their libraries as I do mine. If they appreciate good things I have no doubt that they will.

WILLIAM GRANT.

Paterson, N. J.

You have made no mistake in selecting the two libraries you mention for your weekly reading, as they are, according to the opinion of the reading public, the brightest papers that have been placed before our boys for many a year. We hope that you will always remain as satisfied with ALL-SPORTS as you are now; and we have no fears to the contrary, as our publication is growing better constantly. Your commendation of our weekly is borne out by the large body of readers who have stood by us for so long.

Hurrah for ALL-SPORTS! It is the greatest paper that I ever read. I don't want anything better. It always contains a good lively story, and is well written, something I can't say for other weeklies I have read that were published by imitators of your wonderful library. I want to tell you about a dog that the neighbors next door have had ever since we moved in the street. I never saw anything like it. Sometimes I think it is a human being, it is so intelligent in its ways. We call it the "laughing dog." Its owner hunts every Saturday, and takes "Tip" with him. The dog has been trained to point at snakes as well as game, for Mr. — is afraid of them, and does not want to take chances of stepping on one. One day, when they were in the woods, the dog suddenly pointed, as if there was something right at Mr. B——'s feet. He jumped back quickly, and got a stick to kill the snake. When he examined the ground where the snake was supposed to be he found a cast-off snake's skin. He thought that the dog had made a mistake, but as he looked around, he saw that the dog was rolling over and over on the ground, barking all the time, as if he had played a good joke on his master and was enjoying it immensely. Do you think that the dog was really laughing? I have described what happened, just as Mr. B—— told it to us.

CHARLES SMITH.

Plainfield, N. J.

This is a very difficult question to decide—whether Mr. B—— or the dog is the real humorist. As we are not personally acquainted with either, all that we can say is that we would have preferred to be present at the alleged interview with the snake and his dogship before indulging in any rash judgments as to just how much humor and intelligence that dog displayed on that memorable occasion. We do not doubt, however, that Mr. B—— knows!

I am a reader of ALL-SPORTS, and can truthfully say that I think it the finest weekly that ever appeared in print. Your "How To Do Things" column is the best that "ever came over the pike," if you will allow me to use slang. May the famous library ever remain as popular with all your other readers as it always will with me.

JAMES RADCLIFFE POWERS.

Kingston, N. Y.

A letter like this we appreciate very much, for the writer must feel very kindly toward us to express himself in such terms of praise.

("How to do Things")—Continued from page 28.

inclines to either side, cutting into the ice with the sharp edge of the blade. In the spin the weight of the body falls directly on the flat of the blade at the central point of the curve when the performer swings rapidly around. Another elemental feature of fancy skating is known as the pirouette. In this the toe-point of the skate becomes a pivot on which the performer rapidly turns with one foot.

After you have gained control of your feet and can perform the strokes just described, try the "simple serpentine," which consists of two curves, one on the outside and the other on the inside edge of the skate. Strike off with the right foot, inclining the body in the same direction, and when you have described a quarter circle,

throw the balance gently on the other side, so that you are on the inside edge and swinging toward the left side. To make what is called the "turn," begin with the right foot, skating forward on the outside edge, the body, of course, inclining in the same direction; and after describing the quarter circle, throw the weight forward on the toe, at the same time whirling around backward, so that you are bearing on the inside edge of the blade.

"The counter three" is shown in Figure I. Start off on the right foot, and lean on the right side. When the toe reaches a point corresponding to the dotted line reverse the foot and go backward on the inside edge. You will notice a slight slant should be made just before the toe of the blade reaches the angle of the two lines.

Now try the "half double three," Figure II. Make a circle to the right on the right outside, moving forward. When the toe gains the point opposite the dotted line swing around the same way as in the second part of the "turn," finishing up the circle of the figure with a forward inside curve.

The next illustration shows the same figure, only the curves are not so deep. Perform this in the same way, but make the curves very shallow. When you have mastered it, try the "double three." This consists of a series of "simple threes" run together, so that the whole figure is a kind of semicircle. By extending these curves to the point where you began you will have a figure made up of continuous curves resembling the outline of a rose. The "rose" is very pretty when all the curves are uniform.

To perform the "loop," as in Figure V., start forward on the right outside edge, swerving continually to the right, so as to describe a sort of oval, but do not change the edge of the blade. After making the first oval, widen the circle till you have reached a point far enough away to describe the second without its interfering with the first one. Continue the forward movement on the same edge and in the same direction for the last oval of the loop. To cut the figure with the left foot, merely reverse the order and balance yourself on the left outside. Always keep the other foot about twelve or fourteen inches from the surface.

When you make "ringlets," begin as in the loop, but extend the curves to as near perfect circles as possible. The turns are gradual, instead of being sharp, as in the case of the loops. The ringlets should be about a foot in diameter and overlap each other.

Do not attempt the "pirouette" (Figure VII.) unless you can balance yourself perfectly. The simplest kind is made by cutting a figure three and spinning around once or twice on the toe of the blade at the point where the two curves meet.

There are a great many other figures in fancy skating, of which these form the basis, but they are so difficult that the young beginner will find all his spare time this winter taken up in trying to master the few mentioned in this article. However, if some of the older readers wish to go deeper into the subject, they will find the more intricate figures described at length in a very useful handbook entitled "How To Become a Skater," issued by A. G. Spalding & Co., New York; price, ten cents.

Next week's issue will contain a paper of interest to all boys who would like to know how to make an inexpensive ice-boat. Full directions, accompanied by illustrations, will be given, to enable any one to build a craft of this kind.

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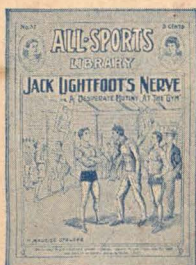
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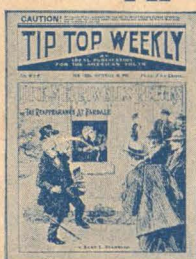
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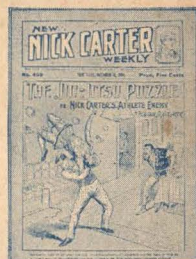
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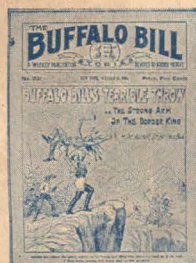
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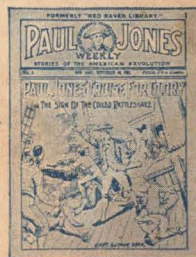
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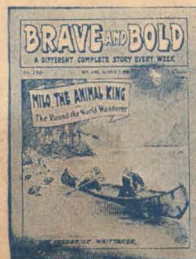
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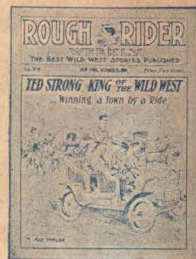
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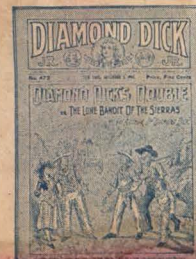
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